

PEOPLE, PROJECTS
AND PAVERS:
WRITINGS FROM BELARUS

Phillip R. Kunz

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ISBN 978-0-8425-2699-9

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my sweetheart, Joyce Sheffield Kunz, who has been my companion during two wonderful missions which we were blessed to serve together, the first in Louisiana Baton Rouge and the second in Belarus. The first mission gave us ample opportunity to assist in preaching the gospel. This second mission was one where "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," was our guide. Joyce was tremendous in both of these efforts.

During this last mission to Belarus Joyce allowed me to wash the dishes in our apartment without my ever having to ask her. In addition she not only permitted me some time to write, but also was willing to listen each time I had something to read to her. She was a companion who always smiled and was positive in whatever we did. We laughed, cried and prayed together and this was what life is about.

These writings are also dedicated to our five children and twenty grandchildren who prayed for us, wrote to us and sometimes called us on the telephone. This support was deeply appreciated and truly felt.



PREFACE

Belarus is a country which abounds in beauty with its forests, lakes and farmland. Various military forces have crossed this beautiful country from time to time and for the most part the land has recovered and still shows its splendor with the birch and pine, the streams and lakes and the sprouting in spring of new crops, the harvests in the golden fall and the serenity of the white winters.

The people of Belarus have withstood the military forces although many of their countrymen have perished by the onslaughts. Twenty-five percent of her population was killed during the Second World War. Some of this killing included driving men, women and children into a barn which was then torched. The poverty, hardship, and general suffering are difficult to describe.

In spite of all of that the people have rebounded to rebuild the beautiful city of Minsk, with its wide streets, pavers and lovely flowers. The villagers plant their gardens and cultivate their orchards and flowers.

The directors of the Boarding houses and orphanages do the best they can to protect the lives of their charges and even to enhance and upgrade life when possible. Nevertheless, they can not do everything. These directors and the various leaders in the Committees of Labor, Employment and Social Protection expressed sincere thanks for the assistance that was provided by Sofia, which was funded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sofia is an organization which dispenses assistance with humanitarian dollars and a wonderful staff of five dedicated natives of Belarus. Thanks must be rendered to the many people who donate humanitarian dollars to bring such great blessings to those who are in such desperate need — to “the least of these.”

Our time was enriched by the good people of Belarus, including the members of the branches of the church who we came to know and deeply love.

My thoughts were recorded in my journal and sometimes here, from time to time, as I pondered, wrote rapidly, read some of it to Joyce, and then seldom rewrote, as may be evidenced as you read what I have written.





A RELATIONSHIP GONE BAD

We saw the end result of a relationship gone bad.
For those who were involved, it must have been sad.
We were on our way to Women's Day celebration
when we suddenly felt this interesting sensation.

Thrown out a little window came items from above:
a shoe, a watch, a whole bag of clothing and a glove.
Things a woman would wear going out on the town:
spiked heels and a pretty blouse and perhaps a gown.

Out came things she would only wear underneath,
the things that may be stolen by a sneak thief.
Out it came then, and through the air seemed to hover.
Goodness knows when worn not much did it cover.

There it was on the sidewalk pavers, thrown in a heap,
good items that most people would want to keep.
The end of what was a good relationship gone bad,
hurt and anger rose up and left the people sad.

When we returned from Women's Day fun and eat
the sidewalk had been cleared and all of it was neat.
Did the cleaner woman sweep it up and throw away?
Or, was the relationship patched until another day? 



AGAINST THE CURRENT

I have found that they say a lot of things
And sometimes to me it untrue rings
But it came to Minsk but not on wings
The tale is told and the words in sings
The Icon was placed in Kiev's church
Where it remained till the Tartar's search
Who thought it not threw it out in the dirtch
From there into the river with a holy lurch
A period of time prevailed in this theme
While the Icon itself swam upstream
Where in Minsk water a light did seem
And the icon retrieved by a holy team
It now is anchored in the holy place
Where it can stare to each revered face
Who now come both night and dayce
To light a candle before the holy face 



YOU SHOULD HAVE CHECKED

You should have checked she said to me
one evening not too long now past.
T'was the same message she gave so many
times and you'd thought that it would last.

Let my experience, said now most plain,
cause you to be aware lest you also suffer
when you did not heed the warning cause
you were either slow to learn or tougher.

Listen, my friend, to one who showed so
little remembrance and was slow to learn.
Don't be a part of those men who seem
to forgot or just really have no concern.

When your shirt is ready to go into the wash
please take the time so you won't be mocket.
Turn it inside out so that you are sure there
is no Kleenex up there in your pocket. 



WOMEN OF THE STREET

Women of the street, who studied not
now must earn their keep
Early in the morning they dig and plant
And every day they sweep

They chip the ice and shovel snow
working four seasons through.
Clean the glass and pick up butts
And plant the flowers anew

Broken nails and blistered hands
each one now must display
But pretty work extends to women
Who stayed in school each day 



WITHER GOES THE TREE?

Oh thou tree which was first sprouted there on the
meadow,
which grew in girth and sent branches far distant from the
sow.

Each spring your leafs begin as a test of the warm or frost
—
either they mature and strengthen the trunk or they are
lost.

With your early birth came a stature above your fellows,
some of which in comparison are more similar to willows.
Deeply rooted and strong, you have endured the wind's tilt
and you stayed true which watching so many others wilt.

You sheltered the family who picnicked below in shade
and provided structure where the birds nests were made.
Fire blackened the bark that surrounds your life's heart,
but strength preserved from the evil of heat and burning
spark.

Now come the men with axes and sharpened steel things
to fell large trees with your thousand embedded rings.

Will you be planes of polished planks turned into the
temple face,

Or be cut into regular lengths and then split to feed the
fireplace? ❧



WITH WARM WATER

There is a place and time for everything so the scriptures say
A time to listen and a time to render nay or yea
For me this time has moved us away from home yonder
Even much to be done has still yielded a time to ponder

Out of the dark ages came those with minds superior
In art and music and building both outside and interior
Soon machinery with cogs and wheels and inclined plane
Came together with hands and minds mostly sane

To bring better clothes Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin
Copper and iron yielded to plastics and artificial tin
Henry Ford built cars to be desired as long as you liked
black

Bomb dropping airplanes were sent down in spirals with flak
Medicine expanded and improved and seeded the prostate
tumor

Computers were miniaturized and will implant is the rumor
Scriptures assert we go from there to here with shoes still
latched

Messages speed around the earth with files of pictures
attached

With all of these discoveries and inventions so fine and
supreme

As they wandered through my mind like I was in a dream
It is clear to me that the noblest of all these both here and
yonder

Was the man whose invention let me to lie in my tub and
ponder 



WINTER WHEAT

Green sprouts of grain begin to grow
and are met by wind and flakes of snow.
The winter wheat must wait for spring
when birds from south begin to sing.

Now contours of soil accented by snow
show contrast between height and low.
Then at last view of contour has fled
when the crust of snow holds the sled.

Winter clouds give way to blue sky
while departing drifts sink and sigh.
The geese wing northward to nest
and the wheat grows up from its rest. ❧

WHEREVER I GO

" 'Give,' said the little stream, as it hurried down the hill."*

This song was taught years ago, but I remember it still.

With Annie Boss in Bern; we sang it in Junior Sunday School.

Over and over we repeated and sang until it became a rule.

"I'm small I know, but wherever I go the grass grows greener still."

At times methought the green grass greened because of Phil.

Now I know that the plowers plowed, the sowers sowed and water

came from above. It was not Phil that greened it, but others' love. 

**With apology and thanks to Frances Janes Van Alstyne Crosby*



DEDICATION

We crossed the street and entered the park
Where Elder Nelson stood before the rock
And there pronounced an eternal mark
Dedication and growth was in his talk

An Apostle cast his pronouncement on the people
As he called down the great blessings indeed
With vigor the truth went forth stem to steeple
And aid was distributed to help those in need

We could not preach nor teach as Jesus did
So two together we went to orphanage and prison
and places that house the old and the invalid
As Jesus did before He died and was risen

We took coolers and ovens and many dishes
Sterilizers and food packets galore
And many things for the Directors wishes
And often with such items there was more

For Jesus said unto the least of these my brethren
As you do for them you will do it for me
Donations of the saints women and men
Helped the desire of the Lord in Belarus be



WAR AND MORE

Belarus, with favored road position for trade
from all directions goods move, deals made.
This land, early on, ruled by Russian Tzars,
from time to time embroiled in the wars.

Napoleon came from the west to rule Russia,
passing on through what was the Grand Duchy,
to be rebuffed and beat at the Berezina River.
His return to Belarus to take place never.

1918 the Belarusian Congress Committee met.
Various freedoms for the people were set.
Then came the Soviet Russians within a year
and replaced those infant freedoms with fear.

Soviet rule was dark and burdensome with power.
Some welcomed the German Nazis with flower.
Millions by Stalin were sent to their grave,
many thought Germany their lives would save.

Not so, for the Nazis from '41 to '45 were here,
who killed and buried and reigned with fear.
Partisan resistance to stop Germans from the go
had earlier feared most the KGB black crow.

For the courage of the brave, monuments abound.
Erected in every village and in the city surround.
These Belarusian hearts are heavy and graved,
for those who are gone and the few who are saved.

Dead is Stalin, as are the Tzars from long before.
Dead are the Nazis with black boots and more.
Dead are the partisans who were counter and spy.
From all of this what have we learned? Oh my! 🌿



USING A TOOL

There was a crow on the ground
Hopping hurriedly all around
Dressed as others black as a crow
Whether Mr. or Mrs. could not know
But it placed a stick in the beak
And with it the soil began to tweak
expectorated the stick and ate a bug
Thought delicious for me ugh
Picked up the stick and again dug
Hoping for a beetle or a slug
Though its brain was like a pea
The crow used a tool you see
If it had a big brain like man
world by a crow would be ran 

UNEVEN STEPS

From the first up to the second floor
is precisely ten feet and no more.
So, fifteen steps of eight inches each
would you from first to second reach.

But no, not so in these Soviet stairs -
Uneven stairs can produce nightmares.
One measures two inches and one seven;
watch carefully or you may say "heaven."

Some are cement and some wood ripped,
some polished marble and some chipped.
Steps slope up and steps slope down
and some bring a smile and some a frown.

Happiness would come to everyone's wish
if the steps had been built by Dale Nish
Then the subject of steps we would leaven
for all of them would certainly be even. 



TWISTED LEGS

Little boy awkwardly pulling yourself across the floor
who never hath had use of your legs for their purpose
but to cross in some morose manner above the knee
with legs obviously put there but seemingly surplus.

Whether you laboriously inch forward on back or front
those legs like a twisted pretzel stay fixed as wound.
Was this ill fate Chernobyl's long reaching tentacle
Or a long distant force like the tides when mooned? 



FIREMAN RESHETKO

Fighting fires is hard and hot.
Safe and comfortable it is not.
If you think this is not so,
please just go ask Reshetko. 

RESHETKO, EVAHM

He de-fired from 1982 for many years.
What others started he helped put out.
Heavy smoke induced cough and tears,
and brought danger to him no doubt.

He climbed the ladder and used a hook
to pull down structures deemed poor.
When people inside his comfort forsook
till the intense heat made his skin sore

His work was to do for others and assist,
put out the fire and clear air with a fan.
To reenter and certify none others were missed;
This was Reshetko, the Belorussian fireman 



THOUGH I DOZE I NEVER DREAM IN CHURCH

I dream in the nighttime, and the dreams are not always
good.

Night is the time for rest to be caught up, and it should.
But no, my head is filled with visions of many things undone

-
with tasks unfinished, classes not found, or from bulls I run.

I dream of neighbors, doing whatever, but in the wrong
place.

Streets are familiar, but compared to life they don't have the
face.

Some people I often see in the nighttime year in and year
out,

and as I ponder the dream facts I wonder what that is about.

Oh I have observed and counted whatever it was that I ate,
for some combination of foods to such dreams opened the
gate.

but what it is, or what it is not, truthfully it appears to me
is not even remotely related to what in the nighttime I see.

The dream is not single, for such a count to me would be
swell.

but they go on and on, some remembered that later I can
tell,

most are random and seemingly without any lasting benefit,
but a few are significant it seems, and the nail on the head is hit.



THIS IS YOUR WORK

Keep my commandments the Savior said,
Let the widows and fatherless be fed.
Bring comfort to all of those who mourn,
Go and seek out the one who is forlorn.
The welfare of all these thy brethren
is the commandment for women and men
If you do it unto the least of these,
know that the Great God in Heaven sees
that ye have also done it unto His Son
on earth, when any good work is done.
So go ye into all the world to preach,
My followers you will the gospel teach.
Let others follow your good example,
you then will be joint heirs with me
for my atonement has bought you free.
Your offerings have blessed the poor
and in heaven you have laid up a store. 



THE FIRST SNOW OF WINTER

The first snow of winter comes in the night
For the children in the morning delight
With extra mittens and well muffled ears
They craft the snow into snowmen dears

Softly the snow falls and caps bush and tree
And crowns each fencepost for all to see
The beaver wonder and saw it fall when
But unconcerned dive deep into their den

The heat may radiate from yonder Sol
And turn to water what was snow all
But there is promise of more of the same
For the hares wild and the horses tame

With the first snow of winter came delight
To child, beast and everything in sight
When it piles up high it may not be greeted so
But could just be seen as more cold and snow





THE END OF A NATION

Ether dwelt in the cavity of a rock
Where he hid from those who mock
He warned them to repent of sin
Lest the Lord destroy them and kin

Coriantumr was the Jaredite king
Who listened not what Ether bring
He repented not nor daughters or son
But build for war and not to run

Blood and carnage covered the land
Pauses were only to increase the man
Who fought and died among the slain
But still the king continued to reign

The war was swift and bodies bloated
With the skin worms they were loaded
The rotting scent blew into the air
Of children and wives and daughters fair

Millions of Jaredites turned into dust
Because in the Lord there was no trust
Battle after battle with very little talk
Ether the Prophet watched from his rock

Coriantumr was wounded time and again
But none of that turned him from sin
He fainted and was passed for dead
But again he arose to be their head

Here were two men mightily and large
Whose ancestors once shared a barge
Willing to fight and willing to kill
With no wonderful purpose to fulfill

Coriantumr against Shiz and his army
fought till night when they could not see
but howled and lamented in mourning
but still did not heed Ether's warning



Killing until drunken with anger
But eager to fight without murmur
And at night they slept on the sword
But none called upon the Lord

It was down to Coriantumr's fifty-two
With sixty-nine Shiz was no fool
They fought again through the day
With only fifty-nine total still to stay

Then all were dead but Coriantumr and Shiz
Having fainted from blood Shiz could not rize
Coriantumr rested then cut off Shiz' head
Shiz raised on his hands and fell dead

He fell to the earth and was as no life
Coriantumr, the king, no family no wife
Jaredite millions and all were gone
Only Ether could write the sad song

He saw it all from his place in the rock
All were dead but with God he could talk
The death of a wonderful great nation
All in the dust — their final station



SOVEREIGN AIRSPACE

The paper plane launched from the window in the
seventh floor restroom.
At first it flew then quickly spiraled into the dirt below,
it's de-zoom.
One of the men who went there for an hourly, but
unlawful indoor smoke
quoth, "American airplanes can't fly in Belarusian air
space, please note." 



SO HE TAUGHT

Lend us your tired, your poor, those who time and power
hath forgot,
who wear the beds upon their backs and wish for relief from
festering sore.

But for relief they pray not, for they have known no God nor
of such been taught.

Some lie from defects of Chernobyl and some from the
effects of the Great War.

Of what do they dream, or on what philosophy can their
mind ponder
as they await a kind hand, charged with a clean cool cloth to
wipe the brow?

Do they sort out the many facets of kingdoms telestial or of
others yonder?

Could their even be one who dwells upon the celestial with
heart somehow?

God knows their fate here to be tiresome, long, empty and
lacking of joy
for they are His children, embodied in earthly parent's flesh
and bone.

Not like the monkeys, nor are they playthings like some say
— God's toy,

but spirits from beyond, whose purpose and being, only to
God known.

Ours is to remember and clothe with covering, cleansed with
love and soap.

We can mattress, and spring, and warm and cool and clean
the air to breathe.

They are there and we are called to labor, and love, and
bring them hope.

Humanitarian projects will not solve all, but for some, there
will be relieve.

He who knows all, knows why they are there, not blessed
with life's good.



For they are **H**is children, and blessings eternal will fall to
their lot.

We may not know those plans supernal, but filling our
calling we should!

The good of it all, we know in our hearts, for the **H**oly Spirit
thus taught. 



SNOW IN THE NIGHTTIME

Snow quickly fell during the night
Covering road and all of the pavers
Early risers walking first the sight
But cleaners work didn't saver

Early feet walked and pushed to ice
Before the shovelers could remove
Then there work raised to thrice
All day efforts it did behoove

Tractors came with angled blade
To assist shovelers in their task
The brushes spun as special made
Long windrows completed last

We came in the dark task was done
Trodding homeward through it all
Workers worked tractors had run
Then fresh snow all day did fall

Feet and hands home came cold
Longing for rest and soothing warm
Owing to birth long ago now old
But not as old either as our marm

I into the long tub with hot water
To rest and lie and then ponder
As water cooled thought oughter
Replace the cold with hot yonder

Which once done I soon discover
It cooled again and had to remove
Rised from water out of cover
Not pleasant but did me behoove

Then again I reclined to ponder
My mind thought of something fine
What if there were something yonder
To change the cold to hot for mine



SLOW SPRING

Sprouts push upward through the soil
and hope that it is really spring.
Sometimes they have chosen right,
but some feel the late frost sting. 



SHE ALSO WAITS

An old woman sets her 250 pounds at the intersection
where the long hall meets the entrance from outside.
She sat there as if she were the chief of inspection
watching to find whether during the night anyone died

When we came she was there laboring in her position,
and still remained as we passed her view thrice or more.
Her eyes were wide to ascertain people like a physician.
her post has remained her total duty since the war.

The boarding house for the psychological impaired
houses many patients with stories perhaps untold -
some have happy faces but many more are despaired.
They stay from when they come until they are old.

Some are residents in body only, with mind departed
waiting out the given time for this life's travel,
far away from the mind with which they first started.
Awaiting here for doctors their mind to unravel.

Most unravel not but fill their time grouped as they were,
waiting to go to the hundred meters to the weekly bath,
or inspecting the visitors who come seldom or never.
Most sedate with heads bent but some showing wrath.

I stop to photograph the old woman there all the while
As she watches me with stern and intense delight.
When the light flashes her face broadens into a smile,
which continues as in the camera she sees the sight.

Then in some day from each the life will finally depart
so two stretcher bearers will carry them to a grave
and bury them by others who were of the same sort,
until resurrection will restore mind, and body save. 



SHOULD THE LID BE UP OR DOWN?

The women say to put the lid shut
so for them it will be dandy.

But if it is left in the position up,
for men it will be more handy. 



SERGEI GOT A BLUE TOOTH

Sergei got a blue tooth, while some have gold,
theirs will chew liver, his will tell what's told.
The blue tooth was not fine tuned when sold,
so discouraged Sergei felt it should be throwed.

When it was made it must have missed the mold;
At least as advertised it has not been in the fold.
Fix it, or rest it not on the ear, but in the cold.
Unfortunately, it was paid for when it was sold.

But wait, for soon it will send talk sweet as told,
and safely everyone will drive down the road.
Sergei will still work - project money be doled,
all because his tooth was blue, and not gold! 



ONE FLEW OVER THE BOUFFANT NEST

Boys gathered for Little League ball
while parents bleachered there to see.
Men watched with billed caps so tall
and the women dressed to a Tee

Then flew over seagulls looking for eats
But one had consumed and was ready
to discard, and some fell upon the seats
but most hit old Ms bouffanted Betty. *VB*



PAPER AIRPLANE

A sheet of paper is carefully folded to look like an
airplane,
but will it glide through space as its maker intends?
No, it spirals down where so many others have lain.
In the air where it was thrown it did not properly
suspend.

A snip off the wing, just on the left and then the
right,
to make the front lighter and reduce the downward
thrust.

Once more the maker sends it accelerating thru
sight.

It begins to soar, then again spirals down into the
dust. 



OF STORKS AND SUCH

I read the News Examiner of a hundred years ago,
which reported interesting things, before my time.
The stork called on the Skinners and had in tow
one lovely daughter to bless their home real fine.

Then the stork missed a while and came not at all,
but followed that with two families in a week.
So history was reported by someone that fall,
"Stork came to two little towns, parents to seek"

Now as I read about those times, with stork and all,
I wonder why I never saw one in twenty years.
Babies came here and there, was the stork on call?
or was that a story parents used to allay sex fears?

Now, here in Belarus we see storks by the dozen.
Mostly they just seem to hang out by the lakes.
They are there even when the water is frozen.
If they are there, then which one the baby takes?

Probably those lazy storks have gone on strike
and refuse to impart their time honored duty.
They just eat and preen and strut around the dike.
No wonder the birthrate falls, it seems to me.

But then when in the hot tub I bathe and ponder:
Why is it in Utah where the birthrate is so high
have I never seen even one stork from yonder,
there bringing its cargo by some mother to lie?

Furthermore, this question I want to submit:
Does the delivery come by stork Mr. or by Mrs.?
Do the females do all deliveries and others sit,
Or does she deliver the him's and he the miss's?

There are many questions and I seek to know
how all of this happens and has for so long.
If you can answer, then please will you show
or is what writers have written all wrong? 



OF SCIENCE AND PRESSURE

In this world we are given to science and such
There are laws and theorems galore
Pythagoras squared the hypotenuse
And found the sum of the squared legs as much
Boyles law took pressure times volume and discovered
That it was Equal to the constant
Supply and demand are of duel import
Cournot then Marshall showed how they recovered
Archimedes, the scientist and physician that he became
worked on the quadrature of the parabola
And in these kinds of mathematic ventures
He found some different and some seemed the same
 $E=MC^2$ was what Mr. Einstein liked the best
People recognized his frizzed hair
More than his energy non-destruction
Bombs and space..., well you know the rest
So there are ways to tell what is happening around
With theorems and laws intact
Postulates are part of the process
And many of them seem to be quite sound
Kunz has an hypothesis that he has put to the test
It appears valid for older men at least
As one goes half the distance to the urinal
The pressure doubles and there we have the rest
What Kunz says may really be scientific law
for elderly men it seems to be factual
But only science can prove it actual
And if its supported it was Kunz who first saw
No, not Kunz at all replied England, Lynn
That is only arrogance at its worst
Men by the billions already felt it first
So Kunz, "You should plan no prize to win." 



MINSK

Oh you city rooted in the distant past
when Tsars held power and taxed the poor
You who raised brick upon brick
and log after log to fall and raise more

Oh you city housed upon layers of bone
drawn from fascist warriors of the west
from people of Judah scattered abroad
and from those who were Belarus' best

Bones of men women and infant alike
Bones covered with bomb fell debris
some scattered and some driven row
upon row into trenches and pits not free

Flesh and bone which housed God's children
was piled and left to molder in the dust
Some from the west and some from the
great empire of the Russian trust.

Oh Minsk built on the bones of Belarusian
Oblasts and districts and villages which bled
let you tears flow into the wandering
river which once was stained with red

Your home and buildings bombed and burned
to charcoaled embers and piles of dust
Your streets and trees scarred and
wasted and your bridges encrusted with rust

You rose again by the sweat as of yore
Out of the ruins ten stories and more
homes to shelter those three out of four
who survived and lasted out the war

Now with wide streets covering the trains
as they move the thousands to and from
Flowered walkways whose pavers are
patterned with reflection of the sun

Let your church bells ring for your birth
resurrected out of the grave of the dead



Let the children sing and play unmindful
of parents and grandparents once unfed

Hear the strains of Olovnikov or Komarova
and let the dancers stand on tall toes
as they swim and fly as the
birds of Swan Lake in the final repose

Build your monuments of granite and steel
to remember the great patriotic war
but look to Puskin and Yanka Kupala
and writers and poets whose spirits soar

Let the bones beneath you molder in dust
and wait after a promised time has run
when spirit and bone upon bone arise
from the grave to behold the Son

Whether from the east or from the west
all of those who stretch forth from sea
and pits will embrace each other as
children of God whose children they be... 



MARLBORO COUNTRY

They the youthful pace across the pavers
A combine in hands tightly held
With thoughts which each will savor
And feelings inside to be telled

He with his denims, on purpose ripped
And topped with football's bears
Fashions mere told and unskipped
Not unusual enough to bring stare

She pushed up on tiny steel heels
Which strike power in pavers clear
Coiffured and covered in fashion weal
For wages low, coverings paid dear

They prance along vigorous and tied
As together new but forever thought
Each with a Marlboro red tipped and dye
As curls of smoke ascend leaving sot

They are in Marlboro Country loud
Top of the heap top of all promise
Riding off through fields and cloud
Everything cowboy and no dust

They are young and ad believers
In Marlboro Country they are best
Course they don't know the ad devices
Neither have they foreseen the rest

Soon enough he will cough and wheeze
And she will intake reduced breath
As her lungs fill with sapping sleaze
And blackness will freedom theft

Nicotine and tar and other foul stuff
Enter their systems and cast out health
Rob vitality and make breathing rough
Not to say set aside much of their wealth

Yes they are in Marlboro Country its true
With their love and dreams supreme
But unknown Marlboro Country is a slough
And surely one day will not be as it seem 🌿



LOST IN TRANSLATION

My hands and arms were snagging and rough,
brought on by my washing dishes and stuff.
I stopped at the store and asked for hand lotion—
but they speak Russian on this side of the ocean.

I washed my hands for her in the thin air,
she watched but acted like she was not there.
Looking on the shelf a bottle looked like Jergens,
and I thought it was good for women and mens.

On my hands and arms I often placed it
and some times when I did, it would just sit.
It puddled and sat but did not soak in at all,
still, I used it all summer and through the fall.

When it itched and scaled as it often did
I reached for the bottle the itch and scale to rid.
Flakes abounded on top of my office place
and I blew it off, happy it was not on my face.

If too much sat in pools on my hand or arm
I wiped it off with paper so I thought no harm.
Through it all the itch and scale were my friends,
so to them daily lotion I, Phillip, did extends.

Then two days ago our friend Sergei was not late
And I brought out the bottle for him to translate.
He and Joyce laughed and laughed 'till they almost fell,
For all of this time I had been using soapy bath gel. 🌿



OLD BENT WOMAN BEGGING

Little woman, where did you come from today?
You were out on the street not so long ago.
I saw you there, but your eyes could not say
for they looked downward isn't it so?

Only at night can you look forward as you go to sleep
for then the hunch in your back is pillow rested -
with covers pulled over you the secret you keep
until the dawn when in the cold you are tested.

Again you come out from where you were
To posit your back upside down before the throngs.
With you wraps secure and them without fur
in almost silence to beg not like others with songs

Your hands are full of money mostly given small,
A tenth of a cent, sometimes a dime often not more.
Surely not enough to warrant risk of a fall
and not enough to replace what your body wore

Where is your family, who once you bore?
Long ago your parents finished life and were gone,
but are there brothers who love you no more
or your sisters - or are you now just the only one?

Many like you last out their stay in a boarding house.
Were you not also invited in to hearty meal and bed?
Do those who should love you live in a souse
and send you out to earn for their bottle instead?

A bill worth not much drops from your knurled hand
where you could not reach to bring it back again.
It could blow away into the cold winter's land,
or perhaps someone puts it in their own pocket in sin.

Old woman standing their bent and partly cold
How long more should your life's payment be?
Have you stood there ever since you were old?
In which tomorrow will we no longer you see? 



HEAD MAN

Horns blow
Sirens sound
Policemen appear
All around

Traffic stops
Folks are sent
Entourage comes
It's the President

Shaded window
Security line
Speeding past
Until next time 



HE CAME A BOY AND LEFT A PROPHET

He came a boy, as most boys are.
He wrestled and gazed at the star.
He'd carve a willow into a whistle
and from the crops chopped thistle.

They pulled him hither and yon
telling him that with them belong
or off to hell would he away,
and there all of his many sins pay

His thoughts were not focused
but he knew that some were pocus.
Then the verse in James gave sight
and he went forward with his might.

"Father," said he when found alone,
and the first seeds of faith were sown.
That faith brought a heavenly visitation;
then his life was a charted manifestation

More good for the salvation of mankind
save Jesus only was not steadfast in mind.
He came a boy like many of his fellow
and left a martyr his destiny charted so. 



FOR JOYCE ON HER BIRTHDAY

Early in the winter she waited for birth
and then came springing onto the earth.
Somehow her parents were given choice.
She showed joy, they named her Joyce.

Now sixty-seven, with her hair graying,
but always still the pleasant joy saying.
She is engaged from morning till night
and wherever she goes there it is light.

Oh, the joy and excitement is known.
Her deeds, and love, to all is shown.
She has brought so much into my life,
For nearly 47 years she is my wife. 



FOG

The fog comes in quietly to quickly survey
at once measures every building and tree
Without permission it envelopes its way
to all it measured and fills the space it see

How does in remember the length of a train
or know how many chimneys were in the air
Whether shape is straight or irregular in main
fog packages everything with utmost care 



FLIRTING

From two rows in front and on the aisle
the blond girl turned and gave me a smile.
Soon after she turned and winked at me.
She was very sweet for a girl of three. 🌸



DOGS

From once some wild ancestors came
but now ubiquitous demanding and tame
fed with warmed and balanced meals
walked and unstopped from tethered reels

Housed in warm and peopled den
Where once were children with the men
Without doubt they are man's best friend
But with loss of children what is the end 



CYCLED

Hired
Inspired
Taught lot
Tired
Retired
Taught not *VB*

RECYCLED

Thought
Called
Taught lot
Inspired
Not tired
Lot taught *VB*



CRIB HOME

Oh little fellow in the crib
with legs pulled up fetal,
Does your mind process?
Is it sharp or working dull?

Body length puts you at four,
crib has held you for twenty.
Two decades of lying there —
is it not enough, or plenty? 



BROKEN BONE

Bump, bump bump goes the right foot
and the left one is high in the air,
it's covering now black as soot,
but the bone healing fair.

Five weeks and more the fibula broken,
Snapped like a dry and dead twig.
Not in that time the foot soaked
because of the casting rig.

But soon the cast will be cut away
and all of the gauze remove.
What will air on that day?
To see all, it will behoove.

One wonders what then will ensue:
Left, right, left, right, left, right
or right, drag left, on count of two,
when foot has fled its night. 



DOUBLE BLESSED

Billions of drops plummet from the sky
To cover pavement peas and potatoes
With no regard for those with high fashion
Nor the pretty maiden with her prom gown
Some contribute to the grain for fall harvest
And some to the cabbage and cucumbers
Others just find a place to rest randomly
Until they evaporate back into the air
So comes the human drops placed on earth
Where they may smile and serve with love
Or be part of the clog in prison or jail
To wait out their return back to the dust
As rain falls upon the just and unjust
or blesses bush blossoms and beets
something may greener or happily alive
blessed is the blessed and blesser alike 



BEAVERS

Too many beavers for Belarus they say
Find a means to do with them away
But if they exterminate all of those beavers
From whence will come the dam weavers 🌿



ALL FALL DOWN

Joyce came here as a humanitarian volunteer,
with experiences for her so sweet and dear.
But with sweet and dear must come some trial,
so down she fell, blacking an eye and smile.

That was on the right side, a Republican may say,
but that was months ago and not what was today.
Today she fell on the left side and broke a bone.
Though it hurt a lot she hardly made a moan.

Is she on the right or on the left — which party?
She votes both sides since she was forty.
Some might say that this is the middle mode,
but I would say just quit falling on the road. 🌿



ESSAYS AND VARIOUS MESSAGES SENT HOME

TREES

Joyce Kilmer wrote that he would never see a poem as lovely as a tree. As an eighteen year old I was stationed a few days at Camp Kilmer, which was used heavily during the Second World War for troops to embark and disembark to and from Bremerhaven, Germany. For a while, after the war, the camp was closed and then reopened during the time of the Korean War. As I served in the U.S. Army during the last part of the time that was assigned to the Korean War, albeit in Germany, I went to Fort Ord in California, Fort Bliss in Texas and then to Camp Kilmer to go to Bremerhaven and then to Wiesbaden Air Base, where I was part of an anti-aircraft unit assigned to the Wiesbaden Air Base.

Mr. Joyce Kilmer lived in New Jersey and was probably best known for his poem, in which he celebrated the beauty of trees. I saw his trees and I can also conjure up images of trees in my mind that are also lovely.

I think of the plum trees at Aunt Anna and Orlando's home in Bern. As a boy we use to wait for the time when those trees would bear their delicious fruit. As we played in those early days we arranged some of that play to be in their yard. This brings me to a question: Why did we say Aunt Anna but did not say Uncle Orlando, but just Orlando? Why did we say Aunt Amy but not Uncle Alvin — neither of whom were our aunt or uncle, however. Or Aunt Myrtle, who was an older cousin. Uncle Rob and Aunt Nellie were always Uncle and Aunt, unless we sometimes forgot and just called Uncle Rob "Schmid." Also we said Aunt Marie, but only sometimes Uncle Heber and so on.

Aunt Marie had wonderful small trees to lie under when the peas and carrots came on in her garden. Parley and Hilda's trees were fine and large and good for climbing in. The large



trunks would also hide small bodies in a game of hide and seek. Down by their water trough was a willow tree that produced shade for the animals, soaked up a lot of extra water that left the water trough when it was full after the animals had their drinks and the ten gallon milk cans were taken out, and was the source of whistle wood, when Papa would from time to time carve a whistle for us.

Back of Edith and Reed's trees was the small creek and the soap stone, which provided us with entertainment. There were other trees in Bern, many not so large, but still part of the landscape in my mind. Then there were the trees in the canyon where the huckleberries grew. Those trees shaded the little plants just right. We climbed over the fallen trees and around the small ones just beginning to grow to find those little purple berries that were so much harder to put in the bucket than in the mouth.

Joyce's Kaysville trees were black walnut and horse chestnuts. The former provided an exquisite taste and the latter nut for throwing for Beck and toys for Joyce.

The trees of Louisiana send large branches meandering near the ground and provided beautiful material for the photographers or a place to sit and rest for a mission president and his bride. These trees have adequate amounts of moss for decoration. In times of hurricane some of the large trees in the cemeteries tipped over and their big roots were thrust up through the soil bringing coffins and the remains of the long dead to the surface where I suppose the dead were disappointed that the morning of the first resurrection had not yet begun.

Oh, but Belarusian trees! Here I see forest after forest of trees. Pine trees, birch trees and others trees, whose names I do not know. In places the limbs of the trees on both sides of the road reach toward one another to provide a canopy overhead. In other places the trees stand tall and straight like soldiers at attention and guard the roads with their traffics of trucks loaded with sugar beats, potatoes, straw and other such things going to the factories or to the market or to the storage pits.



In the distant the pine trees huddle together and offer a beautiful patch of green. In another scene the birch trees do their own huddling and are pleasant to see. Sometimes the pine and birch trees mingle with each other and seem to have a dancing party of some type. The birch trees are interspersed with white and dark, but the dark seems to be more pronounced in the wintertime.

High in the trees are the birds' nests, now abandoned by birds gone south. Those birds will be saddened that they left so early because the end of the year has come and no snow has fallen. They could have stayed on for a while, but how did they know?

Through the forests are little roads which take the men and women who work in the forest and trim out the dead wood and cut away the parts that ought to be cut away. Through the forest are small pathways for the berry pickers and the mushroom gatherers. This fruit of the forest provide for the winter food and for tasty meals anytime. The red berries can be placed in a bottle to make compote, a fine drink or if left too long, a bomb to explode its stickiness all over the kitchen.

Minsk is filled with horse chestnut trees, which we love in blossom and out of blossom. In the in-between these trees have cast their nuts, on some of which I have painted appropriate faces, which sit on my desk white against brown.

The trees and the crops intermingle to a vast array of splendor to decorate the country of Belarus. These same trees are piled high in the summer to be burned in the winter to heat the old people, children and invalids in the boarding houses in the far flung places where natural gas has not piped its way. The trees are carved by the carvers and turned by the turners for the artists and tourists to buy. These trees overlook the burial grounds of thousands upon thousands beginning with the Tsars and continuing until recent times.

All of these trees, planted by God, are more lovely than a poem. ♡



KURAPATY

Near the Minsk ring road they brought them and shot them, and buried them there. These were not the German Nazi troops, who came later and had their own pits to fill. No, these were the henchmen of Stalin who brought men, women and children from the city and from the villages.

Nearby villagers heard the shooting, the wailing and the dogs barking, but could not interfere. Nadzieja Jafinauna Khomic, heard it when she visited her sister nearby. She is now old and probably no longer a live witness, as is Matruna Mikalajeuna Mantasava and Mikalaj Vasiljevic Ihnasou, but they left their witness.

The “black crows” or “black raven” or “black Maria” were all the same — the black cars with the secret police, who came in the night-time and told them to “get ready”. Bread and lard and a few coins were sacked and taken on the trip. The school teacher or the priest and the farm woman alike did not know where they were going anymore than the bread and lard.

They eventually knew when they were lined up and rifle shot through the side of their collective heads by the NKVD. Those hardened men hoped that they could kill two or three with one bullet to save their ammunition. Their only concern was to rid Belarus of the excess and the enemy. These “enemies of the people” were sometimes carefully chosen and sometimes quickly added to fill some Molotovian edict.

Molotov convinced Stalin that the prisons were to full and anyway “prisoners had to be fed”. Moving half of the village to the pit saved half of the food for a slack economy. “Up-risers” were of no value, nor were the old, the young, nor anyone else — if they helped fill a quota.

They brought them and shot them — three shootings a day, layer upon layer covered with sand. Pits dug in the morning were bloody and full by nightfall. The terrible cycle was



repeated over and over until thousands were gone. Heave,
oh you ground, for the dastardly deed. Heave, oh you
ground, for those covered too early for death, but whose
blood mingled with the sand and the communal drippings.
Oh, let the balance scale tip and the judgment be done.
Close up the infamy. Let the disgrace be buried in history. 





THESE ARE THE ONES

These are the ones who live today, who are young and did not know. We talk with them and we probe for their answers. "Tell us about one of your ancestors." Perhaps like so many upon the earth, they know so little. But some of the story comes out here and there, now and again, to be placed into the larger puzzle of their existence.

We learn of a great-grandfather, who lived in Ukraine in Stalin's time. He was among the more well-to-do and when the land and holdings of such people was not given up freely for the collective farms, these former owners were shot or sent to Siberia to work in the mines. These once wealthy owners were reduced to slaves or dead bones and which was the better course difficult to determine. In the end, one's fate was swift and sure and in the other long and difficult and finally yielding the same end result.

But this great-grandfather was neither shot nor sent, but hid and changed his identity so only his sister knew and that secret was safely kept until after Stalin was dead and even beyond that, until Stalin was removed from his honored resting, side by side with Lenin, and cast out for history to mock.

These are the ones today who are not sure who their grandfathers were because of the burnings of the church records. When the big war started many records were moved to Russia and then returned after the Great War. Many were hidden through the hard times, but many were burned to show the contempt Communism had for religion and its relics, many were burned to hide the identification of children of Judah or the place of rank and position and education, any of which would bring persecution or death. Other records were burned because the incendiary bombs only went where they were sent and had no idea of what they were to turn to ash.

Now so little is known, but will one day be writ, even if not in this life. Yet, some things are known. We know of one



born in a trench. We know of two who saw their mother suffer and die from blood poisoning as an unborn sibling resisted and was brought into the world, piece by piece, forced with wire, which had not known anything about sterilization. We know of the mother who shielded her infant with her own body to absorb the shrapnel of the bomb, piercing through the house and into the cellar. The stories that are so seldom told and with even less probability of being written are not wonderful subjects, like the streams and the trees and the storks and the bees, but some will be preserved for the generations to come. Bless the tellers, and the listeners, and the writers who preserve. 🌸





VARIOUS KINDS OF WORK

The flower beds along the streets are great this time of year. The people work on them all the time. The women do most of the preparation of the soil, planting the flowers, removing the weeds, watering the flowers and removing cigarette butts and beer bottles out of them. Both men and women contribute the stuff to remove. I should mention that men do help with the flower project by bringing in soil and making piles for the women to move where it should be and also by bringing the flower plants on the trucks for the women to unload and plant, which provides some time for the men to catch up on their sleep.

All men do not work part time, however. Our staff at Sofia is super. They work long, hard and effectively. We are fortunate to be associated with them. There are four of them full time and one who comes off and on as needed in the accounting area. Every transaction here has to be documented and the documents properly stamped. While this is cumbersome it also helps to prevent corruption and graft. Of course the best of those who work in Sofia is Joyce, my wonderful companion. She is great with the people here and really loves them. She does well in the project work and also cuts hair, bakes cookies and is learning to cook some new dishes from Belarus. We have "young volunteers" as well. Right now we have three of them but generally only two of them. They do a lot of "health fairs" which are puppet shows for the young people in attempt to get them to not smoke, drink or use so much food that is not healthful. They remind us of our mission, when we served in Louisiana, but can not be so aggressive in the work of building up the membership.

Last week we went to a school for the deaf in a section of the country far from Minsk. We have contributed some hearing equipment so that the young people can speak and hear others with earphones as well as see images of the sounds. We will probably contribute some more sets for additional



classrooms. Some of the roof on the building leaks and it is pretty Spartan looking, but they work on the building as they get funds from the government. In addition, the young people plant seeds and sell the starts to help raise money for improvement projects in the school. They also “hire out” to the farmers to pick up rocks from the fields during certain times of the year. The folks who teach there and administer the school programs are doing the best they can with what they have. We hope the project is approved so we can give some assistance to them. The project money comes to Sofia from SLC through proper and very legal means. We have to be careful to stay within the law on all things. 





DEAR FAMILY:

We are so happy that you can all be together and that the Lord has seen fit to pour down blessings upon all of you. We will be with you partly in our thoughts and certainly in our prayers, as we remember you each day.

We both know that we are doing the work that Heavenly Father wants us to do at this time and we are pleased to do it.

I have just completed the reading of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments and I want to testify that it is scripture. This is the third time I have read it cover to cover and I have learned a lot this time that I may have not known prior to this.

What did I learn? I found parts of it to be very repetitious but I stuck with it. I have seen more clearly the plan of our Father for his children upon the earth. Prophets from Adam through the Bible knew of this plan and testified of it. I saw the faithful remaining faithful with wickedness all about them. We will face such conditions in our time as well.

The early prophets told of the coming of Jesus to the earth and were sure of its fulfillment. The prophets after Christ also knew that He had been here and bore evidence of it.

The significance of the atonement and the nature of it are spelled out in some detail as one looks for it.

I saw more clearly the scattering and gathering of Israel and all of you have directly assisted in that effort. Some by missionary service and some by the payment of tithing and some by prayer.

The last days will be terrible for the wicked and wonderful for the righteous. There will be many marvelous signs given upon the earth; some of these have already come to pass.

I was impressed with the ability the prophets had to recite the words and prophecy of earlier prophets — all of that prior to the computer.



I know that God lives and He knows us and loves us.

I want you to know of two things my parents spoke of often.
My mother use to quote the scripture, "what is a man
profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul."
My father use to say, "Honor your father and your mother."
I repeat these things as well. The Lord bless you that you
will have a wonderful time with one another and feel free to
use what we call ours there in Provo.

Love Grandpa Phillip R. Kunz





A WONDERFUL SUMMER WEEK

Our projects are going well. We got a little additional budget so we can do a few more projects. It is so rewarding to be able to be a small part of the help that these people can receive. Some of the help comes in the form of a new large washing machine that will wash over 100 pounds of clothing at a time. Boarding houses are often filled with old people on a pension, invalids or people with psychological problems, and sometimes just bedridden for any number of reasons. A more frequent change of bedding or clothing means a lot to them. They caretakers are trying to do all they can but sometimes the budget is just not enough to take care of even basic needs.

In some of the villages the people have a little garden in which they grow their fruit and vegetables. We have supplied some small tractors and plows to help them plow the ground to get it ready for the planting of their gardens. For many of them it was just not possible to spade the garden area by hand. They are too old or have only one leg where most of us have two. It is kind of hard to spade with one leg I guess. The tractors are small and can get into the little spaces and still do the job. We are impressed with the cleanness of the gardens and yards for the most part.

We have supplied and are supplying more hearing stations in which deaf children can learn to speak and hear words by personal headsets, watching images on the screen and interaction with other children and the instructor. The equipment is seen by them as more important than the roof overhead, from which they get a few leaks. These deaf children come from the entire region and plant seeds to get starts of various plants that they can sell to supplement their budget. The children also are paid a meager amount for picking up rocks from the grounds of the collective farms.

We are impressed with the beauty of the crops. They have pretty good soil and use fertilizers and in some places have irrigation, but generally "pray for rain." That is we hope



they pray for it. More and more of them are learning to do that as time goes by. At the same time ditches are made through the fields to draw off the excess rain so that it will not rot the crops.

We bought 6000 packets of food that people in a night shelter can mix with hot water, for which we obtained a large water heater. That is the sum of the food they get in the shelter. They go out during the day to try to find a little work and some food. Many of them can't work and have no family or at least a family who wants to have anything to do with them.

Mostly we work with either the Minsk City and Minsk Region Committee of Labor and Social Protection (government committees) which suggest projects for us. We do have some projects in other regions as well, but mostly we try to concentrate our efforts in more centralized areas. We then go visit the site and decide whether to recommend the project or not. If we think it is a good project we write it up and send it in to Moscow where they either agree to fund it, fund it with some modifications or not fund it. So far they have funded all we have written up. Of course we have an idea of our annual budget and have to be careful to stay within the budget.

The city of Minsk is beautiful, mostly rebuilt since the end of World War II, in which most of it was destroyed. Some of it was destroyed by bombs from the west and some by bombs from the east, when the west settled down in the country where they had no right to be. We went to a place about an hour's distance in which they commemorate the death of whole villages that were destroyed in the War. They figure that one in four of their people were killed in the war. Some of them have been rebuilt and some not. They have tombstones not to the people but to the villages. In some cases men women and children were put in barns and burned alive. Belarus is sort of on the pathway tread by armies and they have been hit hard in the past, but have done much in the recovery.



On the 3rd of July we watched their parade as the military and people marched and celebrated. On the 4th of July we were invited to the home of the US Ambassador for a reception and dinner in his backyard. It was a wonderful event, funded for us and two or three hundred important Belarusian by you taxpayers in America. Thank you. A few days following that event we were invited to go to the Embassy to take a photo of a famous man from this country. His name is Kosciusko. He helped America in the Revolutionary War. He did much to help found West Point and to help Washington in the battles with some great thinking. Our government paid for a statue of him on the embassy grounds and also helped restore his birthplace in their country, as well as set up a museum in his birth area. His home in Philadelphia is also a museum which some of you may have visited.

We also recently visited the quarters for many of the early socialist meetings. It was a house where the famous socialists came to meet early on. Across the street from that place is the apartment house in which Harvey Oswald, who they say killed Pres. Kennedy, lived with his wife who was from Belarus. At the suggestion that the USSR may have been party to his death the said government supplied many, many hours of tapes from bugs in the apartment so that the U.S. could see what had gone on. We assume a similar number of bugs but go our way the best we can.





VISIT FROM JENIFER

This has been an eventful time for us. Jenifer came on the 9th and will be with us until Thursday, when she returns home again. It has been a wonderful time for us to have her company and for her to give us the news from back home.

We went to Brest, which is near the border between Belarus and Poland. In that city is a fortress in which a few members of the military held out the invasion for a long time at great suffering. The memorial is also well designed and very touching. Of course we see one side of the great war from this perspective, but that is to be expected from any country as it represents itself. There are statues of Lenin in each village or city where they have a square and always feature Lenin. In addition many heroes from WWII are represented by memorials, statues etc. The war was not easy for these people and we see some of the evidence of this in boarding houses for the veterans, in the hospitals for the psychological and psychological invalids etc.

On the other hand Minsk is a new and beautiful city, having been built for the most part since the end of the war, as almost everything was leveled during the war, first by the Germans, who headquartered in some of the few unbombed buildings, and then by the Russians who bombed the Germans out. The upshot of all of the destruction is a new and beautiful city with wonderful people. The city people look prosperous — some of the less fortunate tend to be placed in boarding houses some distant from the major cities where the budget is never enough. The boarding houses are often remodeled large structures of the very rich, from the early days of this land, who have now gone on to their reward. Of course I do not know what their reward is but as I read the scriptures I think I ascertain that those who "grind the faces of the poor" will be in a worrisome situation.

Yesterday I had a minor explosion. We had been given a drink in a bottle, made of cherry juice and sugar etc. As I



went to open it in the kitchen I could hear the gas start to come out by the cap. I guess I opened it too fast and juice went all over me, my white shirt, the kitchen cupboards, the walls, the floor, the sink, the dishes etc. It was a mess... Red, sticky juice is what it turned out to be. Red, sticky me is what I turned out to be. Red, sticky is what everything turned out to be. 





WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

We visited the War Memorial Museum in Minsk or the Museum for the Great Patriotic War, when the country won its freedom from the "fascists." They don't talk about winning from the Germans — it is always the fascists. It contained photographs of burning people, burning buildings and burning villages from WWII. Other photos showed the shootings, hangings and other exterminations. One photo that was especially haunting was of a woman who the soldiers had just hanged and the soldier nearest to her had a big smile on his face. I suppose that by now he may think of the consequences of their actions. Perhaps he is still alive and doing whatever such people do.

There were photos and paintings of the endless production of materials for war such as the making of tanks, trucks and airplanes and others showing them lined up in almost endless grids, like they use to as they marched in Red Square on the first of May. I thought of the words of Isaiah as he talks about the many chariots, pertaining, I think, to the preparations for and the making of war in the latter days.

In the museum the living heroes and the dead were intertwined. The officers were arrayed with their decorations and smart uniforms, while the soldiers were more often portrayed as just dead, mostly with no names, let alone honors. With all of the mass of human dead were the rifles, pistols, land mines, cannons, trip flares and bombs. We looked at three long floors of the portrayal. After while my mind and heart were filled and I wanted no more.

One nation was the aggressor and the other depicted as defending their homes, wives and children. And I think that is probably the case in all war. One side finds the other "evil" and from the other side the "just" is considered evil. For those who see the presentation there must be some kind of learning that endures. Certainly one can observe all of this and say, "No more war." But it does not happen. We have war after war; war here and war there. There are short



wars and wars that have been waged over the centuries and still continue. Sometimes there is a diminution of fighting and then it begins somewhere else. Recently I also read in holy writ of wars and rumors of war and with no cessation of it until Millennium.

This reminds me of when Joyce and I went to a museum in Tokyo where we saw what was left behind by the Japanese suicide pilots. We saw the notes to their wives and mothers and realized that these men, who killed our loved ones, also had loved ones. And so it goes. The statement is really true, "War is hell."

We were game for something else so we went to the big library. The impressive structure was build over a period of three years like a huge diamond in the sky. At the entrance is depicted a saying in several languages the words, "That the man of God may be perfect furnished to every good work." In the rather impressive lobby of the building we discovered that one only visits with a library card or with a paid excursion with a group at the scheduled times. Problem for us: the guides only perform in Russian or Belarusian. Needless to say, we do not do either one.

Two guards man the turnstiles that admit people into the inner part of the library. We did our best English to say that we only wanted to see where one lists the book, among the 8 million books (many international) he wants on a computer and it is somehow pulled from its resting place in the many stories above and delivered by mechanical means below to the waiting scholar.

The guard was kind and wanted to help us. He told us to wait while he went here and there and there and here and up and down the stairs and then down and up and finally arrived with a man, who was the director, who announced that had we written a letter of our coming they would have been prepared to receive us but he and a young lady, who accompanied him and who also spoke English would have a short time to go with us. She sometimes spoke in Russian and sometimes in English. When she did Russian he translated and when she left he continued in English. The



building was very impressive with a thousand computer stations, large meeting rooms and many paintings throughout. I must confess that we did not see one of the million books but did see a large hard copy catalog like BYU library use to have and were told that the catalog was also on the computer for the students to use. In early September they will have a display of their rare books for people to come and see. We may go and see.

The library is a beautiful building and they are proud of it. A lot of money built it and a lot of money placed the books there. I thought of the poor and needy in Belarus and how they could have been made more comfortable, but perhaps in the long run the books will bring about a long term improvement in their condition.





CHURCH OFFICE

Yesterday we had our English conversation group at the church office building. [The church office building is two floors of a building about ten of twelve stories high. One floor has a room for a small meeting, a foyer and a small office for the branch presidency or district presidency or whoever. The other floor has two rooms and a kitchen and bathroom. The church has to have a legal spot and that is it. We do not hold branch meetings there but they are held in a rented building — the building in which we were locked out and the doors welded shut].

Late in the afternoon we found that the country was having a celebration on the river at night, about two blocks from our apartment. We went and we went not early enough it turns out. It was “wall to wall people” and if you like standing very close to everyone around you with no place to move and tall people in front of you so that you only got a glimpse from time to time of the water show, that was the place to be! The glimpse from time to time was great, however. The show was launched from a small island on the river, “The Island of Tears,” which is a memorial to all of the people from this country that lost their lives in Afghanistan, in the war that happened before our current war there. They had boats with special lights and fireworks, lily pads, light explosions, and other such things to remind one those who lost their lives in that war. As always, here the veterans were given sit down seats near the other people of power and the families of such were in bleachers where standing was the rule, with four or five deep on each bleacher. The riff raff and others such as the “late comers” stood twenty deep on level ground, about 100 feet above the level of the river, which made seeing rather difficult. There were many military and police to keep order, which, given the amount of “hard juices” consumed, could easily have got out of order otherwise.



Speaking of BYU football, we went to a football game here with Belarus playing Albania. We sat in front of five men who were real fans. One blew a whistle during the game, in a very loud manner, making it say something like "Bel A Rus Bel A Rus Bel A Rus," over and over and over and over. We thought we might lose our hearing. When the game got pretty exciting he would beat on Joyce's shoulders and then apologize and shake hands. The fans were all pretty happy about the playing of the game but in the end the score was 2 to 2. We wondered if they had some type of system to break the tie, but everyone started to leave so we did too, like we knew what we were doing.

General order was maintained by a policeman on every row at the end from the top of the stadium to the bottom. The head of each column would give a signal and all of the policemen would sit down and then at another order all would stand up again and stare at the rest of us without any hint of a smile. Perhaps they thought all of the rest of us were not much to look at.

Back to Sunday. One young woman with a husband and a baby came into the meeting with red hair frizzed all over the place. It was long and very red, where it had been blond last week. Women in this country seem to like red hair and they have many shades of red. It reminded me of the many shades of green that we see in nature. I stood by her and held a piece of it on top of my head and thought that it would be an improvement for me.

Since I do not understand Russian I read during the time of Sunday School class and also Priesthood meeting. In Sacrament Meeting we have one of the young volunteers (missionaries) translate for us. Today, I finished reading the Book of Mormon again. I was again impressed with the number of things I had not remembered reading earlier, and with the new thoughts that I had as I read this book. Since March I have read all of the Standard Works. I am amazed at the interconnectedness of the books. I am happy for them and know that the gospel portrayed in them is true and than



Jesus Christ has done a marvelous thing for us. I have read the **Book of Mormon**, the **New Testament**, **The Doctrine and Covenants** and the **Pearl of Great Price** many times, but independently. Only one other time have I read all of them one after another and that was when I was in the military. I have never read all of them in such a short time, however. I am happy that I have had the time to do this reading as at many times in my life I did not have such time or perhaps did not take the time.

Speaking of volunteers, The night after the alligator man from Australia died from the **Sting Ray** barb, our two volunteers were fooling around and lit to candles, obtained at the **Russian Orthodox Church**, in their apartment and left the candles lit on a lid of some type on a chair. They were doing something like a memorial to the alligator hunter. One of the candles must have warmed up and tipped over and at 2 a.m. one of the young men woke up and could hardly breathe. They quickly put out the fire and ventilated the apartment. They were blessed in the end, but it reminded me of **Elder LeGrande Richards's** statement that if the Lord would have wanted to put 40 year old heads on 19 year old bodies he would have done it.





DREAMS

I dream almost every night and usually remember most of them for a short time after I awaken. Many of the dreams are not fulfilling and I find myself late for a flight, can't find an address and so on. There have been those times when the dream was telling of the future and significant to what was going on in my life. With that as a preface I will relate dreams from the last two nights.

The night before last I dreamed that we sold our tent trailer to my brother, Paul. He put a pitched roof on it with plywood and then put about six inches of soil on the roof and placed sod on the entire roof. Our daughter, Jana, came along and saw it and said, "I hope the grass grows quickly because Dad promised us that we could borrow it and take it to Yellowstone." One would have to ask Paul or Jana the meaning of that dream.

Last night I got the KSL Stream on the computer and we listened to a bit of the BYU — UNLV football game. It was very late here when the score had just been 21 to 7 in favor of BYU. We went to bed as we had a long day already.

I dreamed that I was riding a bike from Bern to Montpelier, a distance of about four and a half or five miles. The road was still down around Alvin's little triangle, where the top of our lane to go milking met the old gravel road. As I started South from the point there were a lot of shops right along the road. One of them was having some kind of special promotion and was giving away a little chocolate bar to those who looked at whatever they were selling in the shop. As I rode by I reached up and grabbed a piece of chocolate and ate it as I continued on.

About a quarter of a mile later, near Reed's forty, on the right hand side there was a line of women waiting to sample some perfume they were selling. I passed by and got to Montpelier. While there I went to buy a fishing license. As I was filling out the application the man said, "Is Parley your



father?" I said that he was and he said that he was a most wonderful man. I agreed.

Then I was in Bern again and Richard Schmid and I had agreed to each teach a class at **BYU** in Montpelier. This was Richard's first class so he was anxious to get there and to be prepared. I told him that I knew a shortcut and that we could ride our bikes there. We left our cars and headed off with the bikes. I soon realized that we were completely lost. We asked a woman the way to Montpelier and she said that it was very complicated but she would show us. We went through a maze of buildings with narrow passageways and after a while she pointed the direction and we went on our way.

We then came to a road heading right and left but did not know which one to take. We went left and got into the water and had to walk on a rail fence holding our bikes. We went that way for a while and then lost our balance and fell off into a very wet manure pile. We got back on the rail but soon found that it ended and we had to swim across a big cesspool. By this time we were very dirty and tired and did not care about our looks but only wanted to get to Montpelier to our classes.

As we crossed a field a herd of bulls chased us and we just got through the barbwire fence with our bikes as the bulls got there so we escaped them. We walked on carrying our bikes through mud and water, asking everyone we saw how to get to Montpelier. Some gave one direction and some another. We had to go through another pen with four big red bulls in it. Dick was afraid but I was not and told him they would not hurt us because we smelled about like them by that time.

By this time we were both feeling terrified because we could not find the way, nor could any of the people we asked for directions give them to us. We felt hopelessly abandoned.

We went on through one place of misery after another and finally we saw blue sky and thought we were in Montpelier, but we were only just South of Paul and Marlene's house.



We hurried up the lane to our house where we were going to each take our car to Montpelier to meet our classes. Richard got into his car and took off looking like a hog that had been wallowing in the mud. He was so anxious to get to his class that he did not care that his car seats would be very dirty, nor that he would not be very presentable for his first class.

I looked for my car but Joyce had gone shopping and my keys would not fit any of the other cars there. I tried them as I had to get to my class also.

Orlando Kunz was by our front gate and said I looked terrible. I knew that, however. I went to our front porch — the way it was before the room was added on the South of the house — and took off my shoes and shirt. I went upstairs and saw Jody and Bryan and Logan and a baby in the crib. I asked if there was any water to wash and they pointed to the tap by the crib. I turned it on and they quickly moved the baby as the water was going into the crib like it was a washbowl.

My whole body was covered with a layer of goop about an inch thick. Jody and Bryan tried to help me peel it off but it was very difficult to remove. I said that I felt like I had been tarred and feathered and Father, who was watching the process said that I shouldn't say that because Joseph Smith had been tarred and feathered and I should not put myself in the same category as him.

Paul came by and I asked him if he got a piece of candy when he rode his bike past the triangle as he was following me. He said that he did not see it, but he did see the big line of women getting the perfume sample. I said to him, "You probably don't believe all of the misery we have been through and thought we were just sitting in O'Neal's shed all of that time." He said that he did believe me and tried to help pick some of the junk off my skin.

By this time I was stark naked but I did not care who saw me that way as I only wanted to get clean. We had been at the cleaning process for an hour or so and I was worried about my class. I could not remember if we were supposed to meet



on Monday and Wednesday nights or Tuesday and Thursdays. Someone said that Bruce Chadwick had called wondering why I was not at my class so I quit worrying. I knew he would cover for me. He said that Richard showed up for his class on time but looked and smelled like hell.

I awoke in a sweat and said out loud two or three times, "Thank the Lord that I was only dreaming." I thought I would awaken Joyce but she slept on not knowing what terrible things I been through. I turned on the computer again to KSL to find that they just announced the final score as 50 something to 7 in BYU's favor. I went back to bed and then got up and made a few notes so I would remember the terrible dream. I don't know the meaning of it.





DIRECTIONS FROM MOSCOW

Minsk, Belarus
26 October 2006
Dear Family,

Our assignment here is to be the Country Director and Assistant Country Director for Welfare in the country of Belarus. At the same time we are within the Russia Moscow West Mission, which was the Russia Moscow South Mission when we received our assignment. This dual assignment presents something of an issue at times.

We are under the Mission President in terms of getting a temple recommend but at the same time independent from him and under the welfare services department. There are two young volunteers serving with us. They have been young men until this last transfer when we got two young women.

This weekend we are have a zone conference with the president, his wife and two assistants attending. The other day the sisters informed us that we were to each prepare a five minute talk and that some of the small group would be asked to speak and others not. The topic was from a specific chapter of the Teach My Gospel book. In addition we were informed that we were to make a fifteen presentation on chastity, also based on the book.

The first problem to surface was that we had left our books at home, along with all other religious material except our personal scriptures. So no problem, the sisters brought one of their books. Then Joyce raised the question, as she had earlier when the sisters gave her the assignment for us, whether or not we ought to do this. She asked them who gave us the assignment and the sisters said it came from the President. As we thought about it we decided that it would not be good for us to do this.



I wrote an email to the president indicating that we would be happy to fill the assignment in Utah and perhaps in Russia, but not in Belarus. He asked what assignment we were talking about, as he called me back within minutes of when I sent the email. I responded that we had been given the assignment to speak and we thought we should not do that as it might place our position here in jeopardy as we are here for humanitarian work and not as missionaries, like they have in Russia. As you know, I like to speak and feel that we could have filled the assignment on the spot without advance preparation, but in this case had to decline.

The President asked who gave us the assignment and I responded that the sister volunteers here had passed the message to us. [That reminds me of Johnathan's story of being called as Elders Quorum President in a foreign country by the Bishop rather than the Stake President or a member of the High Council. As he acted surprised by the nature and delivery of the call he was told that the Bishop had been called by telephone and told , "Guess what? You have won the lottery and you are the new Bishop."] In any event the President said he had not given us the assignment and that we were only to be invited to attend if we would like. He then called again a second time to say that he had not asked us to speak and did not know where it came from. Our being here does not include anything but humanitarian work, as the government defines it.

As we think about it whether the sisters were passing on the talks in order to escape it themselves or if the Assistants were making decisions, which may be common here but would not have been in Louisiana. It is also apparent, that at least in earlier times and perhaps in other missions in Europe East, as well, the Assistants made a lot of decisions regarding zone meetings, transfers and so on. That may explain the non-overlapping transfers that have occurred here, much to the detriment of the work.

This is not intended to be a black cloud hanging over our heads, but a fair representation of how our work here is not



always without questions. It must be difficult for the president as he tries to get a visa to come here and watch over his branches and the young volunteers when he can only speak by request to the religious committee within the government, which to date has always been turned down. The whole operation is complicated and fraught with difficulties.

We thoroughly enjoy our work here and love to be in a position where we can be of service to those who need it, although that also gets to them directly as we deal only with organizations which are intended to help the poor and needy. The people are wonderful and so far the cold has been alright for us. As we realize that our time is already half gone Joyce says, "Don't say it." I feel as she does. We will find it hard to leave when the time comes. This land is beautiful with its trees, open spaces, farms, villages and most of all lovely people.

The other night we attended a concert, which I think we already said something about. As we heard the beautiful music I thought of how a person could write all of that music, putting in all of the various musical instruments at just the right time and in such a manner that the end product was so magnificent. I thought that I could do that if I only used one note at a time and if there were no sharps or flats. The composers must certainly have been inspired by the Lord. The musicians who transformed the marks on the pages into what we heard also have to have been inspired and have developed their talents well. I think of the woman who went after a program to congratulate the pianist and said to the pianist — one like Reid Nibley, "I would give half of my life if I could play like that." His response was, "That is what I have done."

One other thought: I took one of my airplanes down to the men's room, which is about thirty feet from our office to fly it out the window. Our office window was closed and is hard to open and shut and the restroom window is always open because the men go there to smoke, which is



against the law and is especially not appropriate with so much wood in the building, like the old wooden floors. Two men were there as I launched the plane, which spiraled down to the ground in a very unimpressive manner before these Belarusian men. As they observed the crash one of them said, "American planes do not fly well in Belarusian space."





WHERE ARE OUR PARENTS?

28 October 2006

I realize that today is my father's birthday. He would be pretty old if he were still with us: 112 years to be exact. Mother would be much younger at 106 years. Joyce's father would be 107 and her mother 103 years old. As I sit here thinking of the day and of yesterday I wonder what they are all four doing right now. I wish one or all of them would come and sit on our couch and have a little visit with us. They would be able to tell us some things! I suppose, measured by the long stretch of things, we will be nearer to them and will know a lot more too.

Yesterday Sergei, Joyce and I left our apartment at 7:00 a.m. to go close a project which we started some time ago. We obtained some earphones, microphones etc. for a school about four hours from Minsk. The school is for all of the deaf students in that territory. There were four pre-schoolers and the rest of them went to age seventeen. With the earphones each student can turn the volume up as loud as they need to and hear some sounds. They can respond to the teacher with the attached microphone. In addition, many of them can sign, as do the teachers.

The school does not have enough budget — [who does in Belarus?] and the project was especially satisfying. Two of the little pre-school children were orphans. Apparently some parents just abandon children with such handicaps. We arrived there as the school was to end for the weekend and some of the parents had already picked up their children to take them home for the holiday, which for them was to last for a week. One little girl was looking out the window, perhaps waiting for parents or perhaps watching others leave, knowing that no one would come for her. The joy the new equipment brought was housed in plenty of sadness and tragedy.

On the way to and from the project we took a lot of photos, some while stopped and some while traveling at a good clip.



Needless to say, more of those taken when we stopped were of better quality than the ones taken through the windshield or out an open window. The fall colors were just magnificent! Here they refer to fall as the Gold Fall. The gold of the birch trees is spectacular against the green pines. We would take one photo and then another scene would jump out and say that it too needed to be recorded for some future website, photo album, or perhaps to just be stored away for a generation until someone had time to look and admire it.

We arrived home at 5:45 and were to be at a special performance at gymnasium 14, where an outstanding group of students would sing and dance (as is the custom for the folk) in honor of the medical people who have been here for a project to do heart operations on children. The volunteer group comes from American and Canada. Doctor Novak heads it up and he has come for a number of years, but often brings different members in the team, as volunteers can be assembled from various places.

The performance was wonderful. They were of professional quality, as judged by one who has seen a lot of such artists, but is otherwise perhaps not skilled enough to make such a judgment. We were there at the invitation of the Minsk Rotary Club, to which I pay my dues. As their usual practice the President of Rotary presented many certificates of award, or diplomas, as they call them here.

We had some one on one discussion with Dr. Novak and he invited us to come to the hospital next February, when he comes to watch and take some photos. We plan to honor his invitation when the time comes. So the night ended late. We were offered a ride back to our apartment with a couple of women, one of whom is a doctor. She talked about our projects and said that she felt badly when the country would not accept the neonatal resuscitation program from Utah. She has been using some of their material and finds it very helpful. The government apparently refused it because they did not think Belarusian doctors needed training from the United States.



Today we went to our English conversation group at the church office building, but not a person showed up. Some have classes that meet on some Saturdays and some are harvesting and some just tired I guess, as am I, so I go quickly to bed and perhaps sweet dreams.





ALL WATER FROM HEAVEN DOES NOT DROP

31 October

Yesterday the MP came and we had some training — mostly on that which we can not use here. As we began we heard that the hose connecting the washer in the young sisters apartment broke during the night and ran around their place and down into a shop below, where it did a lot of damage. I suggested that we take photos of the damage to the shoe shop prior to their deciding to throw all of the shoes on the pile that would not sell in prior years.

Today was a day for the sisters, Eugene and two lawyers to meet and check things out. Initially the shop wanted about 40,000 dollars, but today they got it to 40 pair of shoes and the shop itself. I suppose we will end up paying 20 or 30 thousand dollars for the damage. The connection where the washer and the hose from the lead just broke. The threads were still in the one end and the thing just broke apart. Who is to blame? Poor materials? Poor connection — probably not as it has already been there for two or three years? Anyway, water runs down hill and we were the source of it as the washer was obtained and connected by the volunteers.

There have been a few phone calls back and forth. It is hard to be in a place with no authority and delegated responsibility.





BOARDING HOUSE VISIT

2 November 2006

Halloween came and went and we did not trick and treat nor did anyone approach us for handouts.

Today we closed a project where we bought a walk-in cooler where meat was on the floor last time we visited. We also bought another cooler, so one was for really cold and one for just cool.

The director thanked us and thanked us. He said that several organizations had visited them but we were the only one to give them any help. He directs a large boarding house with people who are mentally ill and other such problems. We are thankful that we could help them. It is really our sponsoring organization that gives the help and that means most of you in the long run.

Nevertheless I come away with pictures in my mind of persons stooped low on their heels, off by themselves in their own world with eyes toward the floor, of those with hollow eyes, some with very loud and talkative voices and other such images. All are children of God and all should be treated with dignity and respect. I do not understand it all but I know more than I once did.





HOLIDAYS SOMETIMES YIELD SORROW

6 November 2006

A holiday has been established here. For the celebration of this holiday some worked half a day on Saturday so they could have today [Monday] off and tomorrow, which I think is the real holiday. At any rate many have Saturday, Sunday, Monday and tomorrow off work.

As a tribute to this holiday I declared that Sofia people did not have to work on Saturday nor today nor tomorrow, although I think the government already made the decision about tomorrow.

As a further tribute Joyce and I slept in until about 9 this morning. Unheard of!!! But it did happen. Then Joyce cooked some eggs and ham and we ate a proper breakfast. We then went to the office for an hour or so and did some work. [Since we did not understand the significance of the holiday we thought it ok to work a little.]

We then went to the Gum department store and bought a few small items.

We then went to a place across from the Cheluskin Park to visit a site that Joyce knew of which is called Tolbukhine Boulevard. There are buried, according to Eugene who was told by an old man whose own eyes saw it many years ago, 10 to 12 thousand people. It appears that they are soldiers and Belarusian, but perhaps not Jews. I have to do a little more research to satisfy my knowledge about this. We did take photos and there are two monuments — not scribed in English so we will have to have them translated by one who generally went to class and did not skip.

There was a large ravine which may have been used as a garbage pit. Bodies were brought in and laid away one layer at a time and covered with soil prior



to the next layer being placed there. The old man, eye witness as a young boy, described the events.

Today the area has various trees, some crisscrossing sidewalks and the two monuments. A large number of crows seem to be the guards, undertakers, or overseers of the area. Some of them sit diligently on the limbs of the trees and gaze about, while others, without so much reverence, pick through the snow for acorns. One acorn, missed by the big black birds was retrieved by me and placed in Joyce's big bag which holds everything and is carried most everywhere. Whether it will become part of an important display or just discarded at some future point when we try to get everything into the allotted luggage, remains to be seen.

The little "park" is about half a block wide and 2,166 feet long, as carefully stepped off by Phillip, who one should remember was experienced as a Boy Scout in doing such stepping off, and if that does not count it should also be remembered that said Phillip stepped off the length and breadth of haystacks with his father to calculate the proper tonnage of hay contained in it.

Let such information would lead one to think I was not as reverent as some of the crows, it might be pointed out that I did go with Joyce to inspect this site, with not too much protest and this on a cold day. The cold and wind was enough to freeze the tears on Joyce's face.

Who killed who and how many has been writ by the historians and other such record keepers and will undoubtedly be modified by those acting under the direction of whoever rises to the top in power from time to time. I did not think so much about that today but took a photo of a tree with two main branches which seemed to indicate heaven or hell, as many people see the end of things. I took another with many branches, going every which way, and thought that might also indicate different kingdoms



and layers of goodness or badness. In place of such thought perhaps I should have just had some tears and keep walking with more reverence. I did have some redeeming thoughts, however. I questioned myself as to who would do the family history for those folks and are they already waiting for some good soul to be baptized by proxy for them.

On the way home as we walked thru the tunnel from one subway line to the other, we saw an old woman asking for money. She had a hand full of bills, each worth very little. She was bent over so far with what we assume was a severe case of scoliosis that her back bone seemed to be almost in an upside down "U" shape. In that position she could not look at people, but only leaned against the cement wall and held out her hand. I walked back a ways and recorded the image so that my mind can remember it when the normal memory processes give way. I hope that the little I put into her hand may benefit her life in a small way. As we started on our way Joyce looked back and said that she had dropped one of the bills. I went back and picked it up for her and she thanked me for doing that. She was in such physical condition that she would have been unable to bend over and obtain the dropped money.





UNCLE GEORGE AND AUNT EDITH'S FAMILY

6 November 2006

Dear Kathy, Valerie, Clint and Vicky:

At this time I want to say something about the George and Edith Kunz family, and of Gary in particular.

I have wonderful memories of Uncle George as we fished and hunted together. His visits to his brother, Parley — my father — were always a special time, when I happened to be at home. When I visited in Bern and attended church he often gave the lesson in Priesthood and his testimony was confirmed.

Aunt Edith was a strong willed and lovely woman. One summer she contracted to clean the Bern school prior to its opening in the fall. She invited me to help her. She did the work, but I assisted by handing, fetching and being there with her. I was always proud that she was a democrat.

Douglas, I did not know in this life because he came and went prior to my own birth. There was never any doubt in my mind of the love that his parents had for him, nor the love carried by his brothers and sisters.

Betty Jo was older and left Bern while I was still pretty young. What pride I felt as I heard that she was the Relief Society President in her ward in California? Bless her for it.

Barbara was a good friend of my sister, Naomi. I knew her quite well and was happy for her good heart and service to others.

Geraldine is my age and we did school together, along with Dianne, Connie, and Larry. She has weathered life well and her testimony kindles and rekindles others.

Kent was a missionary with my brother, Richard, in Switzerland. People there still speak well of him. He has been generous and kind and is well thought of.



Roger was younger. I knew him as a boy. He went away and I remember Uncle George speaking of the training he did for football and then of his work and prominence in Pocatello. My wife, Joyce, and I attended an outing in Pocatello, which he did much to put together and we are proud of him and what he represents.

And now I think of Gary. I know he fits above Geraldine and after Barbara. He is the age of my older brother, Owen.

As boys Gary, Ivins, Owen and sometimes others played together. We were Boy Scouts and we camped together, worked on merit badges and had some service projects. One year we cut willows for firewood down by the river at Ed and Vera Alleman's and provided some for Aunt Myrtle and some others. We had fun doing it.

We hunted and fished together and he was good at both. We fished one time north of Soda Springs. Gary drove and after an early departure for the fishing day and a long day we returned home with him driving. He was tired and from my vantage point in the back seat I could see his eyes in the rear view mirror. Sometimes his eyes would try to close and I would tap his shoulder or speak to him loudly. He was a good sport.

I remember with horror when he had a run away and got caught in front of the teeth of a rake heading south from Bern. He was rolled over and over on the rocks and was badly injured. The ward prayed for him and for his recovery.

Uncle George bought a new Jeep after the war and Gary took Owen and me to test it out. We went down below Alvin's to the lane leading to the Outlet where we milked cows in the summer. It was not summer and we high centered it in the deep snow and had a dickens of a time getting it back on the hard road. We laughed a lot about it.

We milked together, put up hay, hauled hay in the winter, dug graves up in the Bern cemetery by hand with others



who volunteered, sang in high school and grew up pretty well.

He was proud of his wife and his children. Kathy, you were a special addition to his life (as wives tend to be good for their husbands.)

Soon I went different places to live and so did he and we did not see one another often. I knew of his marriage to Kathy, of his broken heart with the death of Craig, of his move to Salt Lake and so on. But the years pass and pass. I saw him sometimes at a funeral and was always happy to see him. Now Joyce and I are in Belarus serving, and we will be unable to be with the family at this time.

We express our love and sympathy and heartfelt best wishes. We know that Gary has this special reunion with his Grandfather Kunz, who is also my Grandfather and with his Grandmother, who was not my Grandmother, but my Aunt. He has hugged his parents, Douglas, Betty Jo, Barbara and Craig. I am sure that Uncle Parley and Aunt Hilda have hugged him too, as have so many others.

Now, in the eternal perspective of things we must see that soon we may also be there and will hug and be hugged. May the blessings of God be with you and comfort you and sustain you. Our love, Phillip and Joyce Kunz





VISIT OF VANDAM AND PAGE

12 November 20006

On Thursday about noon we [Sergei, Joyce and I] went to the airport to receive two visitors from Moscow: Martin VanDam who is the Director of Temporal Affairs for the Europe East Area and Rick Page, who is the chief legal counsel for the same area. Brother VanDam had previously indicated that they had two purposes for their visit: 1- to audit Sofia to make sure everything we do is honest, above board with the government and well within the laws of the land, and 2- to better understand the organization of Sofia to be able to present it properly to the Presiding Bishopric, who do not understand why we have so many employees and are so different from the rest of the world. The Sofia staff has been a little bit concerned with the visit. Joyce and I did not have the same kind of concerns because our income is not attached to the organization.

We drove past the Hill of Glory, where the last battle commenced to free the country from the German control which had existed here for some time. After taking them to their hotel to drop off their bags we came to our apartment to spend the afternoon with them — just the two of them and Joyce and me. Joyce had prepared a wonderful salad and we ate well and then went to work, sitting around the kitchen table. They took a lot of notes, asked a lot of questions about our operation and seemed to be satisfied with our answers.

We went to eat about 5:00 and were then to walk across October Square and attend the ballet. As we got to the door we were turned away because I had mixed up the tickets and we were supposed to be at the symphony hall and the next night was the ballet. By that time we had only ten minutes and we had to hail a cab, which turned out to be not easy, and go to the other hall. The taxi driver did his best and we got there, checked our coats and were in our seats a full



minute or two before it started. I was rather embarrassed but it wore off ok.

The evening included some short lectures from some professor who was very animated and sounded like he was saying interesting things, but we could not understand the language. The music part of the program was really fantastic and we all enjoyed it. The final part of the program was a Russian pianist, who did not look like such, but more resembled a big Russian bear. He was a very accomplished musician and really knew how to make the piano talk. The evening ended at about 10, with faithful Sergei there to haul us all home.

Friday saw us in the office at 9:00 and we were ready for a long day which included a short introduction to the whole staff and then the two from Moscow interviewed and questioned each member of the staff, without much break except to have Sergei get their computers to work and when they took us all to lunch at the Drinking Man Restaurant. We decided to continue some of the work the next day and took off early enough to get to the ballet, which proved to me that the tickets and ballet and place of the event all matched beautifully. We had a splendid evening together.

Saturday morning Joyce stayed at home and the four of us went to the office where Sergei worked on Rick's computer and Marvin worked on his emails and notes from the previous day. The problem with both of their laptops was that the modem was their cell phone and for some reason everything had to be fixed so that it could receive email properly.

We then went to the monument across the street from us, where five thousand Jews were put to death and buried in a pit. They were touched as we are each time we go there.

Joyce had some sandwiches and salad for our lunch and then we went to visit the place of the death of the people of many villages — Khatyn. I will write more of Khatyn later.

We went to the Church Office Building and then relax until time to visit the sisters' apartment and see what had been the



problem with the water spill from there onto the shoe store below. Then we went to the Japanese restaurant where we ordered to find they had no chicken — after half an hour and then that there was no beef, after another half and hour and at last we were fed and during the evening Marvin questioned the District President about the church here and of legality etc, the sisters being the translators. It was a good day but busy too.





MALIGNANT TUMOR

They fairly skip along as they pass us by. They with their fingers intertwined and tightly held as if one might fall into an uncovered manhole and the other be not prepared to retrieve the other back to the top of the pavers. They are youthful and move forward to encounter and conquer the challenges of life.

He is dressed in the properly worn denims, cut and made old along the seams to demonstrate fiduciary care with his means and to be side on side with current fashion. His top cover is a cotton pullover left over from the Bears Lions game of several years ago, but newly found in the kiosk markets in Belarus, or perhaps even made near at hand without license.

She loudly approached and loudly passed with the steel high heels striking the pavers with the rhythmic beat of the smithy now so seldom found in urban areas. Her short skirt revealed long slender legs not muscled and thick like her hoo carrying grandmother during Soviet times. The skimpy remainder of her other coverings also were unlike those of her grandmother and would surely have brought embarrassment to her grandfather, had he not been killed when the 120 mm exploded just out of Breast. But there they go dressed in one edict, not proclaimed by the President, but faithfully passed by peers.

Each had the customary cigarette in their other hand, lit and heavily used until it customarily nears its filtered end. These folks are in Marlboro Country. Huge billboards perched here and there along the streets proclaim the merits of being in Marlboro Country, where the air is fresh and clean and the horizon, from the vantage of being on the saddled horse's back, seems lovely and promising.

In the security, brought by one another's hand, they hold what may be the undoing of that security, as smoke curls from their cigarette into the air above the pavers and on above the wide streets and up above the tall buildings and



up up and away. Happiness is here for they are in Marlboro Country. With eyes locked upon eyes they do not see the curls of smoke fall again upon the pavers to be taken in by all passers, yes, even by those who don't care about Marlboro Country.

Those who never experienced the "pleasure" of Marlboro Country and those who caught a realistic glimpse of it and quickly rode in the other direction may know what it really entails. But this young couple may not know of the changes in the breathing muscles as emphysema sets in. They may not have heard of the blackening of the lung as cancer replaces what once brought oxygen into the blood stream. They may not have watched and listened as one attempted to draw breath through the hole in his esophagus. They may not have watched a young bride to be as she tried to clean her stained fingers or whiten her teeth. They may not know of the harm that can fall upon their newborn's body and spirit. They may not know of the many opportunities one day that their "cigarette money" could obtain for their children and for themselves. They may not know of the many who are lain away prematurely to take their place among the dead. They may not know any of these things, but what is important is that they do know they are in Marlboro Country.





ISLE OF TEARS

25 November 2006

We left work early and, as Joyce has now prodded me on for ten months, walked to the Isle of Tears. This is a small island in the river where this country remembers those who died in their conflict with Afghanistan. These people make many monuments to help them remember the wars they have had, but some portray writers and poets as well.

The island is really quite close to both our office and our apartment, but it took us an hour and a half to journey from the office to home. The day was beautiful for late November and the sky was mostly clear and blue. Some views I committed to digital remembrances as the scene fairly leaped out upon me. Others thrust upon Joyce and she instructed me to take it, usually with the "camera up and down."

We saw a manhole cover, which from the "K" marked upon it, signified that it led to the sewer pipes below. The K was enveloped with a ridged circle of iron and fanning out from that were elongated S's leading to the outer cover. "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder," they say, and the cover *per se* was not Belarusian art. But the moss, oh, the moss neatly grown between the curved rails of iron!

On we walked nearly to the river, where the water was smooth enough to give wonderful reflections of whatever rose up beyond it. There was the tall Belarus Hotel with the nearby Casino, the former of which houses the Mission President and other Church related visitors from Moscow and Salt Lake. I think they do not frequent the Casino, or at least they do not hint to us that they need to borrow a little cash to make their return trip. No, surely, they come only on official business and do their work and say their prayers.

The ship on the river is mostly just stayed tied to the shore. But there the "passengers" can walk down the gangplank and eat and drink their refreshments and pretend they are at



top but still on the side. Soon other ducks come to muddle up the mirror.

We watch then for a while. One stands on its head with its tail feathers thrust into the air and the front of the body sunk into the water. Something must be down there to draw interest because soon several more of the ducks are also on their heads. We left the ducks to do their thing and looked onward. Two tall cranes were positioned by a half build building, standing at the ready to lift their cargoes high into the air. They reminded us of dueling warriors or perhaps of Don Quixote's tilting at windmills.

School boys ran by, clothed in their green and red running togs. One boy is left behind — he is black. Then, as if by afterthought, two of the boys at the end of the running group speak to him and he smiles and catches up to be a part as they stop for drinks in the kiosk ahead. Further on a little boy, daring his mother, walks on the wall which holds the river in. He runs on ahead to scare a flock of pigeons who wanted to stop where he wants to go. His mother scolds him for not minding her and staying by her side.

A couple sits on the wall facing the river. They are fifteen inches apart, suggesting that they have a disagreement to work out, or perhaps that they are new to one another and they dare not sit too close too soon.

Then there are more flocks of ducks and more groups of people. One woman feeds the friendly ducks in the water, but her dog barks and scares the ducks. She must stop the feeding to curse the dog and then goes back to feeding her ducks, but cussing does not stop the dog's behavior for long. Our thirty minute walk home had turned into upwards of nearly two hours, and the sun goes down early this time of year.



IN FAVOR OF WOMEN

We went to the opera last night and after Act 1 the problem was clearly evident. It was also evident after Act 2. It has always been evident. Well, perhaps not. But I have seen it plainly during the past fifty years. Is nothing to be done?

Susan B. Anthony and Margaret Sanger, where are you now that you can have some real impact? And what is your interest, Senator Feinstein and Dianne Pelosi? While you concern yourselves with budgets and war and the general economy, who looks after this problem? Have you forgotten your sisters who still suffer? Perhaps Harriet Miers could have helped, if had she passed muster and got on the Supreme Court.

Where are the vast groups of feminists, who took the time to burn their bras, but did not address this real issue? Betty Freidan, do you remember when we crossed to an island in a little boat at a scientific convention and I asked you about the issues of the Native American and you said that you had no interest in those folks; you were only interested in women's issues? I remember reading a notice of your passing so you probably do remember now. Why didn't you act when you could have? Isn't this a woman's issue?

All of you lawyers, who seem so concerned these days in class action suits, with their attendant fees, couldn't you show support for this issue pro bono publico?

You professional women, who have climbed the ladder, can you not now look down? You builders and designers, where are your buildings and designs? Can you not have a new vision of what ought to be?

And you women, where are you? Where are your brooms with which to fight? Where are pans to beat in cooperative rhythms? Men don't have your problem. Women of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your long lines, waiting for a turn in an under built restroom.



THOUGHT

I thought a thought, then I thought of the thought I thought but the thought was not. The thought I thought was not, but I know the thought I thought was thought, I thought. Was the first thought I thought a thought or was it not a thought? Well, the thought I thought that was then not must have been a good thought but now it is just not, so it is just another thought.





HOW THEY COME AND GO

In Soviet times, after World War II, Minsk was a mass of rubble with only a very few buildings intact. As the rubbish was cleared and new plans made for the rebuilding of this city some wide streets were cut through the piles of bricks and debris and large trenches dug beneath the surface. They placed stone upon stone and cement wall upon cement wall to create two intersecting lines in which the underground rails were laid and the trains placed on the rails. This system moves nearly a million passengers a day, in the world beneath, while the top can accommodate cars and trees, people and dogs, city lights and flowers, or piles of snow, depending upon the season of the year.

At the entrance to the Metro the doors at the tops of the stairs open as the air in front of the rapidly approaching train moves into the station. The train going the other direction pulls the air from outside and sucks it into the system, opening the doors in the other direction. This action provides pretty fair air-conditioning.

As the driver stops the train he opens the doors and people rush out of the cars while others are quickly moving into one of the five cars. A few Russian words are spoken, the doors close and the train starts up again and within 50 yards is already traveling at a speed of thirty to forty miles per hour. It is impressive that so much mass can be made to move so quickly. Trains on one line move at fifty miles per hour and on the other slightly less.

It accelerates even more quickly and then slows a bit for the slight clockwise turn and then the counterclockwise turn where the steel wheels squeal on the rails of similar material. One wonders how long the wheels last before they must be replaced, and hopes that someone has not overlooked that appointed time, for by now the train is moving very fast through the tunnel, lit only by the headlights at the front of the train — the front determined by which end the driver sits in. My observation is that the driver always sits at the



front! Since he does not have to steer I think he only opens and closes the door, announces the next station stop and "hits the juice" or whatever the power source happens to be. In the train cars lights reveal a few advertisements by the car windows and doors.

Sometimes every seat is taken, generally by the old and infirm or by those with young children. Others crowd in and hold on to the overhead rails, the straps, or the up and down pipes which support the seats, and sometimes just on to each other. Some of the younger ones, either because of necessity or as a sign of athleticism, brace their feet and legs and support themselves in an upright position during acceleration and deceleration, which is often very sudden and at times jerks.

These trains follow one another through the tunnels at intervals from 1 to 2 minutes during rush hours and every 3 or 4 minutes at other times. If the car is not too full one has the advantage to catch the eye of a child and wink or smile and attempt to get a similar response. If the parent observes the action he or she often encourages the child to respond in a similar manner and the parent seems pleased that an adult is recognizing their child.

These less crowded trains also give the opportunity for us see pointed shoes, which they call fashionable, and wonder how they keep them in line without stumbling or to view the many bags carried by the passenger as they hide the contents of potatoes, gifts, books or beets or whatever can sometimes be seen at the top of the bag, thus destroying the function of secrecy. If the car is really crowded one has to face someone and hope it is not a man who has been drinking and has foul breath, for there is no turning away from it. It helps a little to breathe slowly and hold your breath as long as possible so as to not intake the smell. I assume that such men are the same ones that clear their throats and spit big piles of goop on the sidewalks as they move about. Fortunately the women in such a position are generally well perfumed and that makes the short ride to the next stop somewhat more pleasant. In times of high



passenger volume one has to decide whether to have hands up or down because the pressure of so many other bodies often permits no change mid course.

The trains run from very early to very late and moved 800,000 people per day in 2005 and now nearly a million. It is hard to imagine all of those people moving about in automobiles with one of two passengers aboard.

On the streets there are regular busses and trams that move about as rapidly as traffic permits and also vary in the number of passengers on board. Needless to say the doors are very hard to shut at times because of the number of persons who have wedged themselves into it. The few seats are crowded with the old and infirm and with small children. Others hang on to what is available to grab and the same thing goes for arm position and smell as with the Metro.

Near the doors leading to the Metro we have to insert a token or swipe a magnetic prepaid card to get through the turnstile. On the bus passengers are asked to show their properly canceled ticket or prepaid pass by a woman, in uniform, who walks up and down the aisle, if she can get through. Of all the times we have gone on the bus I have never been asked for my ticket. Joyce is asked almost every time the ticket taker is able to come through the aisle. Joyce thinks that I look like a Russian to the ticket taker and she doesn't want to bother me. Some say I look like the Mayor of Moscow and some say I need a birthmark on my forehead to look like Gorbachev.

Increasing affluence will undoubtedly bring more automobiles to increase the general traffic jams. On all but the main streets one can find autos with their engine running, the radio blasting out popular music of the day as the driver awaits his passengers. The waits vary from a few minutes to a few hours. Periodically the driver gets out of the car, opens the trunk, kicks the tires, wipes the rear view mirrors or visits with other drivers, who also spend most of their time just waiting.



Traffic moves pretty well except as people come and go from work. There is one exception when the traffic on the street moves very well. The street clears of all traffic when the President comes through. Policemen with clubs, pistol and stern looks block the pedestrian crossings to keep all pedestrians off the street at such a time. Police cars, with sirens sounding and horns honking lead the President by two or three blocks. One such car has a very find loud speaker system which warns everyone to stand clear. This is followed by four or five cars, one with the President, but all moving very rapidly as the streets have been completely cleared except for the bird droppings and the occasional pigeon that did not get out of the way of the President's lead cars. The same type of event sometimes happens with a bus replacing the President's car. Honored guests are moved from one important spot in the city to another. Needless to say, we have not been an active part of any of those spectacular events.





HOW DID HE KNOW?

Holidays are somewhat different here than in America. I have thought of what we did at home, however. As I think about it now I ask myself, how did he know? Oh, I understand the "naughty or nice" thing. Even our parents knew which we had been. He must have easily known that kind of thing, in his mysterious way of finding out. Perhaps our parents told him about our behavior. Or, I wonder if the Bishop told him how we acted in Primary and Junior Sunday School. Anyway, if our parents knew that kind of stuff it must have easy for him to figure it out. But as far as the other goes, how did he know?

I'm thinking about it now. We prepared for the big Christmas program in Bern, Idaho. We had to wait soooo long. When the wheat was harvested it was not too soon to think about it. Then the frost came and then it was Halloween, when we got a sack of good stuff from the neighbors without having to hardly dress up at all. Norine gave the best stuff - usually a candy bar, but it took a long time to get to her house, but it was worth it. By then we already had some goodies in our sack so we could eat on the way as we walked.

After Halloween we had the longest wait for Thanksgiving to come. We ate a big dinner at home or at Anna and Orlando's. It seemed like we traded off every other year one year there and the next at our home. I always wondered why we did not have turkey. There was a lot of chicken, however, and plenty of other things. I know that one table would never hold all of us and the food too.

Then the longest wait was for Christmas. It took forever. And I still wonder about it: how did he know? We had a fine Christmas party at the church. There was the program, which always included the Christmas pageant, with Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus. Sometimes I was one of the three men with a staff and dressed in a night robe and some kind of cloth around my head. I don't know where the robe



came from because we didn't wear that kind of stuff to bed. We would wait in the little area at the top of the stairs until Ramona or someone would tell us it was our turn to walk out on the stage.

Sometimes the program dragged on a little too long for my taste. I wanted to see Santa Claus. When the program was over we put the chairs around the sides of the chapel and sang some Christmas carols while we waited for him to come. He usually came when we were singing "Jingle Bells." But how did he know? I remember sometimes he came out of the door leading to the basement where the big coal furnace was. I am not sure if he would have come in through the hole where the coal was slid down the chute or if he came down the chimney proper. [Of course this was when we were in the new church. The old one had a big stove in the middle of the room and anyway I was too little to remember how he got in.] Owen might know but he died. I'll bet Paul remembers. From there on up to Fern they would all remember. Oh, but Fern and Geniel died too so it would have to be one of the others to ask.

Then there were the other times when he would come in through the front door of the church. Maybe that was because he didn't have time to get up on the roof or something. In he came and he brought a big box with sacks in it. There were sacks of goodies for every one of us. The sacks had peanuts, hard tack, different color gum drops — I always especially liked the black one and the green one. We also got an orange or an apple too. What a treasure! But, how did he know?

Of all the places Santa went how did he know how many sacks to bring? They did the census even long before those days, but it was not available, at least in the library of Bern School District 13. He got the message about who was naughty or nice but how did he know how many of us there were? I suppose he knew about Dingle and Ovid and Bennington too and took the right amount of sacks there. Could he have had a class in demography or population studies? I wonder if the Bishop called him. Probably not



because where would he get his phone number? When I lifted up the receiver and the woman said, "Number please." I knew George's number was J5 Schmid's was J4 and ours was J3, but I don't think Santa had a number.

I think about the number of sacks to this day and I still can't answer the question, "How did he know?"





ONE BIRD APART

Black birds, with a little gray feathery band about their neck, move about on the patterned paver stones, looking for a few crumbs left by the women and men of Minsk as they sauntered about the night before eating their rye bread and drinking their beer. If they had not developed the taste of alcohol or were savvy enough not to start on that course they found the kvas more to their liking. Most assuredly, however, if the birds had joined in the drinking they would not have dropped the bottles onto the pavers to shatter into so many little pieces for the poorly paid women to sweep up early the next morning before the walkways filled with those on their way to a slightly better wage.

Certainly one of the wonders of all nature is how such a small bird, not so big as a crow, but larger than a western warbler, can emit such a loud, sharp sound. I suppose that were humans to have such a sound system, multiplied by their much superior size and weight, a man could easily call upon his fellows many miles away.

Then, as if by signal the birds fly off leaving the pigeons to ferret out the rest of the breakfast, amidst the shards of glass, while they join their own kind upon the ledges of the tall buildings. There they commence to sing. In huge choirs they sing anthems perhaps known only to Deity. No, surely the birds must get meaning from the notes for they sing together and then as if directed by a feathered Toscanini, off the choir flies, sometimes in flocks of a thousand or two, over the trees and into the distant only to return again, in a large swaying mass, moving this way and that, again as if from the direction of the unseen baton, to light once more on the ledges of the tallest buildings. One of them even finds his way to the flag mast, the communication tower, or whatever thrusts itself above the roof.

That topmost bird may have the prominence of a leader, or for all I know he may just be the final one in the caravan to light and finds no other place that is not already lit. The



former sounds more reasonable, however, and to that bird it must have been his great, great grandfather, or however birds calculate their distant ancestors, yes, his direct progenitor that perched upon the tall tree and saw it.

Yes, he who wrapped his little bird feet tightly around the little twig assigned to the topmost branch of the tree and watched. He watched as they marched from the camp across the street, not like soldiers young and well fed, but like those tired from the waste of war, starved and cold and uncared for by their captors. The march was more like a bunch pushed on by their fellows behind and the ones behind them with bayonets and dogs with sharp, hungry teeth. The bird watched them as they stood not willingly, upon the edge of the ravine and he heard the firing of the guns as the bullets did what was assigned to them. He watched as the ravine filled up, body upon body, until he could watch no more.

Now a bird grandson, or granddaughter, [Ned Hill would know which] probably the latter as that gender seems to have more tears and more reverence in such places, sits high in the tree, with a silence not usually characteristic of such a bird, but sitting there with a sense of what such a place deserves, and watches over those who came there so many years before.





A VISIT FROM THE DRAGON

Tonight, beginning at 7:00 p.m. I began to eat chocolate. The chocolate came from a large piece of chocolate which was divided into squares of about two by two and half an inch thick. I found that I could put the whole thing into my mouth but there it was so large that I had to sort of let it warm up a little and then I could bite it and let it melt and savor the taste and feel of it.

The chocolate tasted good so I ate another square. Joyce said that I had enough but I am my own boss in this sort of thing so I had another and another over an hour's time. In total I ate about 300 grams of chocolate. I would probably have eaten more but Joyce was making me feel some shame for having already eaten that much, so I quit.

After a while bedtime was approaching so I thought I ought to take four calcium tablets for the day. I usually eat three in order to get enough calcium, as I do not drink as much milk as Joyce. My assumption was that the calcium would also help me get through the night without an attack from the dragon. After brushing my teeth and before saying my prayers I took two antacid tablets to insure a good sleep as I was already feeling the effects of too much chocolate in my stomach.

As I lay down at on my back at 10:15 p.m., I placed my thumbs under my hips to tell myself to sleep on my back and not roll over on my side, as was my usual practice. I fell asleep and awoke at 1:05 and felt that I was in trouble. Something was going on in my stomach that was not pleasant. I put my rather flat pillow on the floor and went around the bed to get Joyce's pillow which was more bulky and would let me be in a more upright position. Nevertheless I felt me head slowly sinking into the pillow. I think I was falling asleep again, however.

At 1:30 a.m. the dragon hit. He blew his hot, acidic foul spew up from my stomach into my throat, as he had done earlier in my life, but not for several months. He is a terrible



and vicious companion at times. Earlier on I had two treatments of the purple pill, Nexium, and that seemed to neutralize his power. Last night I was in trouble.

In order not to awaken Joyce, as I have come to fear the sharp poke she gives me to lessen the sound of my snore, I got up and put on my pants and shirt and my expensive slippers to protect my feet from the cold. I went into the bathroom and took two more antacid tablets and then put on my heavy overcoat and sat down in the big chair to sleep. I thought this would be good place inasmuch as I often dozed there when reading or watching the television news. My stomach said, "No."

The lights were all out but I could see the dim light coming through the translucent curtains from the Casino across the street. I shut my eyes tightly but sleep did not come. I saw the little light from the microwave in the kitchen and the little light on the television, with a smaller light under that one, and then I heard the clock on the wall, powered by a battery. From fifteen feet away I could hear its tick tock tick tock tick tock. At times the tock became louder as the second hand was going around on its given course, only to quiet down again to a regular tick tock. I wondered why it was happening. Perhaps some electrical or mechanical engineer could explain it to me. I don't remember anything from A. J. Winters' physics class in Montpelier High School that would explain it. I pondered on it for quite a while.

At last I thought I would turn on the television without sound and see if that might put me to sleep. Channel 1 was just a white screen, channel 2 was black, 3 two men appeared to be taking, 4 showed a woman with big eyes, 5 showed a man making a ball from soil on the farm, 6 said "riding sun," 7 tree bugs, 8 horse and cart, 9 building something, 10 a bear walking through the trees, 11 environmental stuff, 12 blank, 13 man on phone, 14 MTV, 15 color bars, 16 war film, 17 dark, 18 white screen, 19 man



talking, 20 movie advertisement, 21 white, 22 white, 56 white, 57 white, 58 white, 0 white, and back to 1 which was just a white screen.

I shut off the television and closed my eyes but I could hear the hum of the fridge which had just started to do its thing. Perhaps if I were to lie down on the couch I could sleep. I got a little pillow from the couch in the living room and took it into the office and made me horizontal. My feet felt cold, even with the slippers on. After a few minutes I thought the dragon had gone back to sleep so I quietly went back into the bedroom and got into bed, being careful to lie on my back so as to not awaken the dragon. I put my thumbs under my hips to make sure I did not turn on my side, which for some reason really ticks the dragon off and he would be sure to fire me up again.

I saw two o'clock and three o'clock and then 3:40. The next thing I knew the little rooster in the alarm clock crowed and reported that it was 6:02 a.m. The awful night had passed.





SMELLS

6 August 2006

Today as I was writing some material for email to family and friends I thought of the smells in some of the places we have been. I then started to think about smells that are pretty vivid I my mind — vivid enough that as I think of them I can once again “smell” the smell. Some of these are wonderful and some pretty bad. I am going to try and write of some of these as they come to my mind. Perhaps on another day my thoughts would conjure up different smells.

I have no desire to “put down” any person or any place or people. These are just my experiences with smell and others may differ with their description if they could “smell” my “smells.” Each person may think differently of smells just as each person may remember or not remember smells as part of what is stored in their brain’s memory.

Columbus, Georgia: At a time when I served there I remember the smell of the flower blossoms in the spring — blossoms new to me because they did not grow in Bern. Not only blossoms of sweet smells but beautiful blossoms which reminded me of beauty and purity.

Utah: A small rural town where we went for a wedding reception was the site for a vivid smell. As we went into the building where the reception was held there was a very strong odor of cattle. I have been around cattle all of my young life and I did not think of the cattle’s odor. On that night, however, the smell of manure was strong and not a pleasant addition to the event of the evening. It was a putrid smell.

Minsk, Belarus: We went into a boarding house for invalids and pensioners where the smell of bedridden and incontinent boarders was overwhelming. The air was heavy and I had a hard time breathing. In my thoughts of my own distress at the time I then thought of the individuals there and how they had come to bear the burden of the air



because of necessity. The boarders had no choice and perhaps the care givers did not have choice either.

Bern, Idaho and wherever my wife, Joyce S. Kunz, resides and has the time and yeast to make bread: The smell of the fresh bread baking and newly baked is easy for me to recreate in my mind. That smell often occurred in my childhood and youth as my mother baked bread — not always with the best stove and oven conditions. It was a pure pleasure cut a slice and eat it alone, or with a little butter and/or jam. My great fortune has been to have married a wife who bakes like my mother. For what more could one ask?

Weisbaden Air Base, Germany: Just on the side of the airbase, where I was stationed in an anti-aircraft battalion attached to the air base were the wonderful German farmers, attempting to make a living for their families. Part of that attempt included the “honey wagons” which contained the collections and ageing of lots of ingredients hostile to the nose. As the collection was used to fertilize the plants in the field a bit of it got into the airstream and did not soon drop back to the earth but moved across the fence, laced with sharp, cutting barbs, without difficulty or permission.

Montpelier, Idaho when I was a small boy: My father took me into “town” to buy me a new pair of shoes. As the clerk came with the box and opened it and took out the shoes I could smell the new leather and the thought of the new shoes must have enhanced the smell because I can still smell its sweetness. My thoughts today are that the smell of the shoes was modified in the weeks and months that followed. Part of that modification came from walking in rural fields and animal corrals and part from whatever happens to mankind as they walk and walk and walk.

Bern, Idaho: We milked cows by hand and as I milked my head would sometimes rest against the flank of the cow. The combination of the smell of the cow's flank and the new milk coming from the bucket below was not unpleasant to me.



Minsk, Belarus: The air currents move in some mysterious manner so that the air is filled with the smell of the bakeries where a lot of good things are baked. Some times that smell travels for over a mile or so. I have never seen so many different kinds of breads and baked goods and the process fills the air at times so one wants to stop walking and just smell.

Everywhere: The smell of baby powder as it is sprinkled from a container onto a small baby about to get a new diaper is a satisfying odor.

Between the Outlet and the Bear River in Idaho: In the early days we use to cut the wild hay, after flooding the area with water backed up from the dam we used in the Outlet, near where Larry Buhler and I were baptized by Larry's father, Howard Buhler. The new mown hay by the cabin near the Rich Place was pungent and good.

Paul's workshop in Bern: As one entered the south slope to go into the workshop I was always met with smell of oil and grease, some of it spilled and saturated into the wood of the floor, work benches and walls. The tools, collections of odds and ends and everything had the smell with origin in oil products.

Redpine - North of Bern: When I was little the men were shearing sheep by the roadside in Redpine. The wool was placed into large, long sacks and tromped down. I helped (at least as a small boy I thought I was helping) pick up the scattered pieces from the ground and from the fence (tags) and place them on the pile to be put into the sacks. The wool had a distinctive smell - sort of a combination of wool and the natural grease from the sheep.

Bern, Idaho in Parley Kunz's chicken coop: We had just obtained little chicks in the mail from the Bern Post Office, first in my experience run by Barlows' and then by "Aunt" Myrtle. The chicks were placed in the coop on new sawdust and the heaters kept them warm until they could do ok by themselves. The smell came from the heaters and also the new chicks, both good smells for me. —G

29 November 2006

Some days ago came an envelope came addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Kunz 16-93 Melnikaite. We opened it and saw the seal of the State Department of The United States of America embossed in gold and beneath it:

The Ambassador of The United
States of America

Karen B. Stewart
requests the pleasure of the company of Mr. and Mrs. Kunz
at a friendly dinner on Wednesday, November twenty-ninth
at half past six o'clock

To Ambassador's Residence

Remind Raubichi la

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A map was enclosed but we knew the address of the Ambassador's home as we were there with Ambassador Kohl for the 4th of July celebration last summer.

Certainly we would go and Sergei, our friend, co-worker, and often needed man drove us in the van. [The only setback with the whole affair was that he had to wait in the van while we celebrated at the friendly dinner.]

As we got to the gate a guard checked out invitation against his list of guests. Of course my wife would have got in on her good looks alone, but for me it was fortunate that we brought the invitation along. He escorted us to the entrance and returned to the gate.

At the visit on the 4th of July there were several hundred people and we celebrated out on the lawn. Had "Hytrin" not been working I would have needed to enter the house to find the bathroom, but did not need to enter at that time.

We were met on the inside by a young lady who pointed to the bottom of the stairs where nearby there was a display of straw people, as only the Belarusian artists can make them.

We ascended the stairs without mishap; however on the return trip down the stairs we both noticed that one step was taller than the rest. The unevenness of the stairs is rather common in this country and I suppose would drive our neighbor, Dale Nish, crazy.

At the top of the stairs we were met by two young men serving juice drinks and some kinds of food that one takes with the hand and hopes the crumbs will more or less remain on the paper napkin – also with a gold embossed emblem paid by the wonderful taxpayers of America. We milled around, eating and drinking [no alcohol drinks] and visiting with the others who had arrived.

Five or six people from the embassy were there and we knew all of them except for the Deputy Ambassador who came in the fall and the Ambassador who also came in the fall. Ambassador Stewart proved to be a cross between Marie Cornwall, with whom I taught at Brigham Young, and Gloria Wheeler, with whom I went to school at the University of Michigan. Joyce only saw Marie Cornwall in her, however.

After everyone had arrived (about 18 to 20 in total, including the Embassy people) we stood in a circle and introduced ourselves to each other. All of this took place in a rather large, but well decorated room with embossed carpet. We were then invited by the Ambassador to follow her into the next fine room where three round tables were set. Joyce and I started toward the left most table which we thought not to be the main table. The Ambassador said, “Mr. Kunz, you sit here by me, on my right. We have split the couples up tonight and Joyce will find her place tag at that table.”

I sat to the right of the Ambassador and Joyce sat to the right of the Deputy Ambassador, who in the absence of the Ambassador would be the *chargé d'affaires*. That may not be spelled quite right but I do remember the main part of it from high school civics. So, in everyday terms I guess we were both seated in a place of honor.

In front of us were the cards, placed on proper stands with said gold seal and our name affixed. To the left of the plate and forks was the individual menu, with seal:

Menu

November 29th, 2006

Dinner

**Whole Baby Clam
Chowder Parker
House Rolls**

**Beef
Tenderloin
in Latin
Spice Rub
Roasted
Potatoes
With
Paprika &
Herbs
Vegetables**

Dessert: Coconut Pie

Right away a young man came with red wine, probably of good vintage, but it turns out we both declined and were offered juice instead. Orange juice seemed to work fine for the customary toast in the middle of the meal.

I should point out that there appeared an invited guest just prior to the Ambassador taking up her fork and saying “bon appetite” to signal that the rest of us could begin to eat. It was fortunate that most of the guests were not yet observing the fine details of the room, but were still distracted with the “*where are you from’s* and the “*how many children do you have’s* thus did not notice the intruder. [Without the intention of boasting, or giving to too much pride, I must admit that I saw the uninvited guest. I like to think that it was my rural, farm upbringing. Often I was able to see wild animals in the distant as we traveled by automobile or train, where other travelers did not see them.] Or, perhaps the guest was invited by one of the fulltime staff members, who was not happy with his salary raise, or that the Ambassador had snubbed him earlier in the day. All of this may be on the wrong track.

But there it was, no larger than the sharpened end of a pencil lead. If the Ambassador was number 1, and I was number 2 – on her right – then the little fellow crawled out from under the forks just on the left of number 3’s large plate. What I assumed to be a very small bug may indeed have been a very small bug invented and planted by the KGB. Could it be possible that the tiny critter was directed which direction to turn by some unseen signal from a satellite high in the sky?

He [and I am sorry if I got the gender mixed up as such a small thing did not display any appendages large enough for me to see from so far away] anyway, he quickly moved from the forks to a spot about one third of the way to the center of the table and then made a right turn and disappeared under a butter dish. After that, he was gone and I was sort of happy that he was. It had occurred to me, when his legs were in full motion, to quickly play a “cover you eyes and no peeking” game which would permit me to quickly thumb the fellow and it would all be over. But then I thought that the Ambassador might peek and suffer some type of humiliation, so I just let him crawl and pretended not to notice.

Conversation during the meal was splendid and there was a fair amount of serious discussion and much humor. I had a

few stories to tell as well. [I also heard Joyce at the next table, so she was a major contributor] Both Joyce and I enjoyed ourselves at the table to which we were assigned. I found that Ambassador Stewart had majored in astronomy but did not like the advanced math associated with the upper division classes, and detested the thought of teaching, so she took the Foreign Service examination and became a career diplomat. She has now been on the public payroll for over thirty years. The meal was wonderfully delicious and we insisted on the entry of the chef so that we could have a round of applause for him.

Following the dinner we went to a third room to have half an hour of music, from two graduates of the Minsk Belarusian School of Music, each with her dulcimer, and again the gold seal:

Residence of the

United States

Ambassador

Minsk, Belarus

November 29, 2006

Dinner in honor of Wardens

Tsymbaly Duo “Anima”

Maria Kuchinskaya

and Tatiana

Kupreyeva Present

Belarusian Music:

Modernity Iosif

Zhynovich – Melody

Alfred Shnitke –

Watercolor Vladimir

Kurjan – Andante

Victor Voitik – In

Spring Yauhen Glebau

– Adagio

V. Kuzniatsou – Pastoral Variations

And a final selection, which we applauded to bring on: the melody from Doctor Zhigavgo.

It was a very delightful 2 and one half hours. We did not stay for the last coffee out of consideration to our good friend, Sergei, waiting in the van.

In the final analysis, if I might use a phrase often written in *The News Examiner* in Montpelier, Idaho at the end of various stories from the little town in the valley, “and a good time was had by all.”